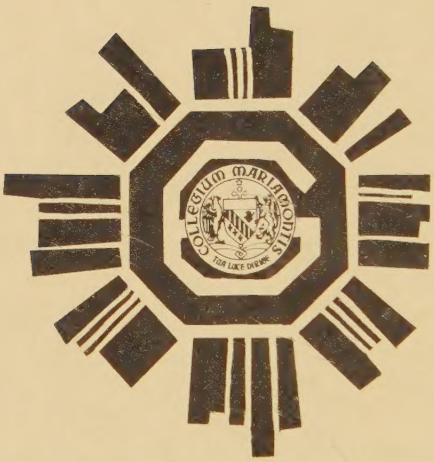

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French Classics for English Readers

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Each 8°. With photogravure frontispiece

FOR FULL LIST SEE END OF THIS VOLUME

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

New York **London**

French Classics for English Readers

Edited by

Adolphe Cohn and Curtis Hidden Page

Molière

The Affected Misses, Don Juan, Tartuffe, The Misanthrope, The Doctor by Compulsion, The Miser, The Tradesman Turned Gentleman, The Learned Ladies

A New Translation, the Verse Plays being for the first time rendered into English verse

by

Curtis Hidden Page

With an Introduction by

Brander Matthews

Professor of Dramatic Literature at Columbia University

In Two Volumes

Volume Two

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LE

MEDECIN MALGRE LUI

COMEDIE EN TROIS ACTES

6 AOUT, 1666

THE DOCTOR BY COMPULSION

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

AUGUST 6, 1666

(*The original is in prose*)

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

"My public," said Molière (at least according to the legend), "could never be induced to accept sustained elevation in style and sentiments." As Professor Matthews has so well expressed it: "Molière felt it to be his duty always to keep his company supplied with plays of a kind already proved to be popular. So . . . he went back unhesitatingly to his earlier manner again and again, and no more thought it unworthy of himself to write frank farces like *The Doctor by Compulsion* after *Tartuffe* than Shakspere did to compose *The Merry Wives of Windsor* after *The Merchant of Venice*." It is also not impossible that Molière, as well as his public, took real delight and found real relief in this return to the frank farce, after the elevation of his more serious plays. In any case, the "step backward," as it has often been called by his critics, was at the same time a step forward, since in *The Doctor by Compulsion* he produced what is on the whole the best of his many farces; and a really good farce is almost as rare as a good comedy of character. *The Doctor by Compulsion* occupies as high a place in its own literary class or *genre* as *The Misanthrope* in its class.

The story of the peasant who acts as a physician under compulsion of the cudgel, and performs marvellous cures, is as old as the Sanskrit collections of tales, and had been the subject of a mediæval French *fabliau* (with which Molière was probably unacquainted), and perhaps of earlier farces of the same period and kind as *Lawyer Patelin*. Molière's first knowledge of it may

however have come from some Italian comedy. Soon after his return to Paris he had given a brief play called *The Faggot-Binder*, which is not preserved, and perhaps (like most of the Italian comedies) was never written out. The play as we now have it combines the "Gallic humour" of the mediæval French farce (though the extreme coarseness of expression which had seemed to be the inevitable vehicle of that humour is in this case almost entirely avoided by Molière), with the general movement and clever intrigue of the Italian impromptu comedy. Molière, like Shakspere, borrowed everywhere, but made what he borrowed completely his own. In *The Doctor by Compulsion* he has given this story its final form, and has created what is perhaps the most popular of all modern farces. When it first appeared, it had twenty-six successive representations, as against twenty-one for *The Misanthrope ;* since 1680 it has been given at the *Théâtre français* oftener than any other play except *Tartuffe*. It has been almost equally popular in many other languages than French, and has been translated into Russian, Danish, Swedish, Turkish, Magyar, Greek, and Armenian.

Joyous and extravagant as the farce is, it is also significant as another of Molière's many attacks upon humbug and quackery in whatever form he found it. In fact, when the amazing state of medical science in the seventeenth century is known, Molière's satire on it hardly seems exaggerated. The chief and almost the only methods of treatment in use were purging and bleeding. The Medical Faculty of Paris denied the circulation of the blood ; arguing that if it did circulate, any loss of blood in one part of the body would be immediately supplied from the other parts, and so bleeding would be useless ; but bleeding is not useless, therefore the blood does not circulate. Molière was not far wide of the

mark in suggesting that the gown made the doctor, as is attested by part of the form of oath prescribed for professors of medicine on taking office : " I swear to teach in a long gown with big sleeves, with a doctor's cap on my head, and a bow of scarlet ribbon on my shoulder." In an earlier play Molière had directly attacked the four chief physicians of the court, of one of whom, Desfougerais, the famous Guy Patin wrote at the time : " I do not think there is on earth a more persistent or more perverse charlatan than this wretched chemist . . . who kills more people with his antimony than three honest men can save with the usual remedies. I believe that if this fellow thought there were anywhere in the world a greater quack than himself, he would try to get him poisoned." Molière was to return to the charge in his last play, in which he sums up his opinion of the doctors, who were letting him die at only fifty-one years old, as follows : " Most of them are great classicists, can talk fine Latin, can give Greek names to all diseases and define and classify them, but as for curing them, that is a thing they have no knowledge of."

CHARACTERS	ACTORS
Sganarelle, husband of Martine	Moliere
Martine, wife of Sganarelle	Mlle. Debrie
Squire Robert, neighbour of Sganarelle	
Valere, attendant of Géronte	
Lucas, husband of Jacqueline [and servant of Géronte]	
Géronte, father of Lucinde	Du Croisy
Jacqueline, nurse at Géronte's, and wife of Lucas	
Lucinde, daughter of Géronte	Mlle. Moliere
Leandre, in love with Lucinde	La Grange
Thibaut, father of Perrin Perrin, son of Thibaut	Peasants

THE DOCTOR BY COMPULSION

A COMEDY

ACT I

SCENE I

SGANARELLE *and* MARTINE, *enter quarrelling*

SGANARELLE

No, I tell you, I 'll do nothing of the sort, and 't is my place to do the talking and be the master.

MARTINE

And I tell you, you shall do as I please; just because I 'm married to you I don't have to put up with your freaks!

SGANARELLE

Oh! what a monstrous plague 't is to have a wife! and how truly speaks Aristotle when he says that a woman is worse than a devil!

MARTINE

Just listen to the learned man, with his dolt of an Aristotle.

SGANARELLE

Learned man, yes, indeed I am! Find me a faggot-binder who can argue, like me, about anything what-

ever, who has served a famous doctor for six years, and in the days of his youth knew his Accidence by heart.

MARTINE

Plague on thee for an eternal ass!

SGANARELLE

Plague on thee for an impudent baggage!

MARTINE

Curst be the day and the hour when I went and said yes!

SGANARELLE

Curst be the hornèd goat of a notary who made me sign my own ruin!

MARTINE

Faith, it's you who have reason to complain of that business, is n't it!—when you ought to be on your knees every moment thanking heaven that you have me for a wife! Do you think you deserved to get such a wife as I am?

SGANARELLE

Of course not—you did me too great honour, did n't you, and I had reason to be satisfied the night of our marriage, had n't I? 'Sdeath! don't make me speak on 't; I might say such things . . .

MARTINE

What? What might you say?

SGANARELLE

Never mind, drop the subject. Only, we know

what we know, and you were mighty lucky to get me.

MARTINE

What do you mean by mighty lucky to get you? A man who is bringing me to the poor-house, a sot, a scoundrel, who 's eating up all I possess . . .

SGANARELLE

You lie ; I drink a good part of it.

MARTINE

Who 's selling, piece by piece, everything in the house! . . .

SGANARELLE

That is economical—living within one's means.

MARTINE

Who has taken my very bed from under me!

SGANARELLE

You 'll get up all the earlier.

MARTINE

Who won't leave a stick of furniture in the whole place . . .

SGANARELLE

It 'll be all the easier to move.

MARTINE

And who does nothing from morning to night but gamble and guzzle! . . .

SGANARELLE

That 's to keep up my spirits.

MARTINE

And while you 're doing that, what do you expect me to do with my family?

SGANARELLE

Do whatever you please.

MARTINE

I have four poor little children on my hands . . .

SGANARELLE

Put them down.

MARTINE

And they 're all the time asking for bread.

SGANARELLE

Give them a whipping; when I have had plenty to eat and drink, I want everybody in my house to have their fill.

MARTINE

And do you think, you drunkard, that things can go on so forever?

SGANARELLE

Dear wife, softly, I beg you.

MARTINE

Do you expect me to put up with your insults and debauches forever?

SGANARELLE

Do not let us get angry, dear wife.

MARTINE

Do you think I can't find a way to bring you back to your duty?

SGANARELLE

Dear wife, you know my heart is not over patient, and my arm is fairly strong.

MARTINE

I don't care a snap for your threats.

SGANARELLE

My dear little wife, my sweet love, your hide's itching again, I see, just as usual.

MARTINE

I 'll show you I 'm not a bit afraid of you.

SGANARELLE

My dear better half, you evidently want to get something from me.

MARTINE

Do you think I 'm frightened by your talk?

SGANARELLE

Sweet object of my vows, I 'll box your ears.

MARTINE

Drunkard, sot that you are!

SGANARELLE

I shall beat you.

MARTINE

You wine-sack!

SGANARELLE

I shall thrash you.

MARTINE

You wretch!

SGANARELLE

I 'll curry your hide.

MARTINE

Rascal! blackguard! traitor! coward! villain! scamp! scoundrel! cheat! rogue! thief! . . .

SGANARELLE

So! you must have it then? (*Sganarelle takes a cudgel, and lays it on.*)

MARTINE, *screaming*

Oh! oh! oh! oh!

SGANARELLE

This is the only way to calm you down.

SCENE II

SQUIRE ROBERT, SGANARELLE, MARTINE

ROBERT

Hold! hold! hold! Fie on you! What 's this? For shame! Plague on the scoundrel, to beat his wife so!

MARTINE, *her arms akimbo, driving him about the stage as she speaks, and finishing off with a blow*

But I choose to have him beat me.

ROBERT

Oh! I am quite willing then.

MARTINE

Whose business are you poking into?

ROBERT

I am in the wrong.

MARTINE

Is it any affair of yours?

ROBERT

Of course not.

MARTINE

Just look at this impudent meddler, who wants to keep husbands from beating their wives!

ROBERT

I take it all back.

MARTINE

What have you to do with it anyway?

ROBERT

Nothing.

MARTINE

Had you any call to poke your nose in?

ROBERT

No.

MARTINE

Just mind your own business.

ROBERT

I 've not another word to say.

MARTINE

I like being beat.

ROBERT

All right then.

MARTINE

It is n't at your expense.

ROBERT

True.

MARTINE

And you 're a fool to come and thrust your oar in where you 're not wanted.

ROBERT, *going over to the husband, who likewise drives him about the stage as he speaks, beats him with the same stick, and puts him to flight*

Neighbour, I beg your pardon most humbly. Go on, beat your wife, give her a good thorough drubbing; I 'll be glad to help you.

SGANARELLE

But I don't choose to, d 'ye see?

ROBERT

Oh! that 's different.

SGANARELLE

I will beat her, if I will; and if I won't beat her, I won't.

ROBERT

Very good.

SGANARELLE

She is my wife, and not yours.

ROBERT

True enough.

SGANARELLE

I don't take any orders from you.

ROBERT

Quite right.

SGANARELLE

I have no use for your help.

ROBERT

So be it.

SGANARELLE

And you are an impudent meddler to poke yourself into other folks' business. Learn that Cicero says: "'Twixt the tree and your finger you must not thrust the bark." (*After driving him off, he comes back to his wife, and says, squeezing her hand:*)

SCENE III

SGANARELLE, MARTINE

SGANARELLE

There! Now let 's make up. Shake on it.

MARTINE

Yes, after beating me so!

SGANARELLE

That 's nothing. Shake.

MARTINE

I won't.

SGANARELLE

What?

MARTINE

No.

SGANARELLE

Dear little wife!

MARTINE

Never.

SGANARELLE

Come, I say.

MARTINE

Not a bit of it.

SGANARELLE

Come, come, come.

MARTINE

No; I will be angry.

SGANARELLE

Fie! for such a trifle! Come, come.

MARTINE

Let me alone.

SGANARELLE

Shake, I say.

MARTINE

You 've abused me too much.

SGANARELLE

Oh! come now, I ask your forgiveness; let 's have your hand.

MARTINE

I forgive you; (*aside*) but you shall pay for it.

SGANARELLE

You are foolish to make so much of it; these trifles are needed, every little while, between friends; and five or six whacks with a stick, when folk love each other, just rub up affection. Come, I 'm off to the woods, and you shall have more than a hundred faggots to-day.

SCENE IV

MARTINE, *alone*

Yes, go; whatever face I put on, I sha'n't forget my resentment; and I 'm all on fire to find some way to punish you for the beatings you 've given me. I know well enough that a woman always has one means ready of getting revenge on her husband; but that is too delicate a punishment for my hang-dog; I want a vengeance that 'll sting him more smartly; the other would not really make up for his outrage.

SCENE V

VALERE, LUCAS, MARTINE

LUCAS, *to Valère, without seeing Martine*

By jink! we uns 've got a devil of a job; and I dunno what we be going to get by it.

VALERE, *to Lucas, without seeing Martine*

What can you expect, good Mr. Nurse? We must obey our master; and besides, we both have something at stake, in the health of his daughter, our mistress; for no doubt her marriage, which has been delayed by this illness, would bring us in something. Horace, who is a generous gentleman, has a good chance of winning her hand; and though she has shown a kindness for one Léandre, you know very well that her father would never consent to have him for son-in-law.

MARTINE, *musing, aside*

Can't I find out some trick to get even?

LUCAS, *to Valère*

But what maggot has he got in 's brain now, since all the doctors with all their Latin hevn't done her no good?

VALERE, *to Lucas*

You may find sometimes, by much seeking, what you can't find at first; and often in humblest places . . .

MARTINE, *still thinking herself alone*

Yes, I must be revenged, no matter what it costs.

Those cudgel-thwacks rise in my gorge, I can't digest them; and . . .

(*She says all this musing, so that, paying no attention to the two men, she runs against them as she turns round; and then says:*)

Oh! gentlemen, I ask your pardon. I did n't see you; I was hunting round in my head for something I can't seem to find.

VALERE

Everyone has troubles of his own in this world, and we likewise are seeking for something we should much like to find.

MARTINE

Might it be something I could serve you in?

VALERE

Perhaps so; we are seeking to meet with some man of skill, some physician of special parts, to give some sort of relief to our master's daughter, who is seized with an affliction that has all at once taken from her the use of her tongue. A number of doctors have already spent all their science upon her; but people are sometimes to be found who possess wondrous secrets, particular remedies of their own, and who can do what the others could not; and that is what we are seeking for.

MARTINE, *aside*

Oh! what a trick heaven has sent me to be revenged on that scoundrel of mine. (*Aloud*) You never could have hit it better, to find what you are

after; for we have a man here, the most wonderful man in the world for desperate maladies.

VALERE

And, pray, where can we find him?

MARTINE

You will find him now just over there; he cuts wood for a pastime.

LUCAS

A doctor cut wood?

VALERE

He passes his time a-gathering of simples, you mean?

MARTINE

No! He is an odd kind of man who amuses himself that way, freakish, crotchety, whimsical, one you 'd never take for what he is. He goes about dressed in fantastical fashion, affects sometimes to appear ignorant, keeps his learning hid under a bushel, and avoids nothing so much as to use the marvellous talents which heaven has given him for medicine.

VALERE

'T is a curious thing that all your great men have ever some crotchet, some small grain of madness, mixed in with their learning.

MARTINE

This man's madness is greater than you would believe, for it sometimes goes so far that he 'll have to be beat before he 'll own up to his skill; and I warn

you that you 'll never be able to manage him or make him admit he 's a doctor, if the whim is on him, until you take a stick, and bring him, by a good thorough drubbing, to own up in the end to what he 'll try to hide from you at first. That is the way we do when we need him.

VALERE

This is a strange madness.

MARTINE

So 't is; but afterward you 'll see that he does wonders.

VALERE

What is his name?

MARTINE

His name is Sganarelle. But 't is easy to recognise him; he is a man with a big black beard, and he wears a ruff, and a coat of yellow and green.

LUCAS

A green and yaller coat! 'T is the parrot-doctor, then?

VALERE

But is it quite sure that he is so skilled as you say?

MARTINE

Why! 't is a man that works miracles. Six months ago a woman was given up by all the other doctors; they had thought she was dead for six hours, no less, and they were getting ready to bury her, when this man I 'm telling you about was brought there

by force. And he but just took a look at her, and put a bit of a drop of something or other in her mouth; and that very instant she got up off her bed, and began right away to walk up and down the room as if nothing had happened.

LUCAS

Oh!

VALERE

That must have been a drop of elixir of gold.

MARTINE

Very possibly 't was. Then again, less than three weeks ago, a twelve-year old boy fell clear down from the top of the steeple, and broke his head and his arms and his legs on the pavement. No sooner had they brought this man of ours than he rubbed him all over his body with a certain ointment he knows how to make; and the boy immediately got up on his feet and ran off to play marbles.

LUCAS

Oh!

VALERE

That man must possess the panacea.

MARTINE

There 's no doubt about it.

LUCAS

Jiminy! yon 's the very man for us. Let 's go quick and fetch him.

VALERE

We thank you for the kindness you have done us.

MARTINE

Be sure you remember the caution I gave you.

LUCAS

'Zooks! trust us for that. If there needs but a beating, 't is a cooked goose.

VALERE, *to Lucas*

We are very lucky to have had this encounter; and I draw from it, mark you, the best of good omens.

SCENE VI

SGANARELLE, VALERE, LUCAS

SGANARELLE, *off the stage, singing*

Tol de rol . . .

VALERE

I hear somebody singing, and cutting wood.

SGANARELLE, *enters, singing and holding a bottle; he does not see Valère and Lucas*

Tol de rol . . . Faith, I 've worked enough for one spell. Let me breathe a bit. (*He takes a drink, and then says:*) That wood there 's as salt as the very devil. (*Singing*)

How sweet to hear,
My bottle dear,
How sweet to hear,
Your gurgle clear!

All men would curse my luck, I fear,
If thou wert full forever.
Ah, bottle, bottle, doxy dear,
Prithee be empty never.

Zounds! To it again! 'T were not right to breed melancholy.

VALERE, *aside to Lucas*

There 's the very man.

LUCAS

I think that 's a fact, and we 's run right onto him.

VALERE

Let us look nearer.

SGANARELLE, *perceiving them, watches them carefully, turning from one to the other; he lowers his voice, and says, hugging his bottle:*

Ah, my little rascal! How I love thee, my little corksy-doxy! *All men . . . would curse . . . my luck . . . I fear . . . If . . .*

What the deuce! Who are these people after?

VALERE

'T is surely he.

LUCAS, *to Valère*

'T is him, the very spit an' image of him, just like what they told us.

SGANARELLE, *aside*

(*Here he sets his bottle on the ground, and as Valère bends over to bow to him, he, thinking Valère intends to take it away, sets it on the other side; then, as*

Lucas does likewise, he takes it up again, and holds it close, with many gestures, which make an amusing pantomime.)

They are watching me, and consulting. What can they be after?

VALERE

Sir, is not your name Sganarelle?

SGANARELLE

Eh? What?

VALERE

I ask you if you are not the man named Sganarelle.

SGANARELLE, *turning toward Valère, then toward Lucas*

Yes, and no, according to what you want with him.

VALERE

We only want to show him all the civilities that we may.

SGANARELLE

In that case, 't is me that 's named Sganarelle.

VALERE

Sir, we are charmed to see you. We have been sent to you for what we are in search of; and we come to beseech your aid, which we greatly need.

SGANARELLE

If it is anything, gentlemen, which has to do with my little trade, I am very ready to serve you.

VALERE

Sir, it is too much grace you do us. But, sir, be covered, pray; the sun might incommode you.

LUCAS

Clap it on, Master!

SGANARELLE, *aside*

These people are mighty full of ceremony. (*He puts on his hat.*)

VALERE

Sir, you must not be surprised at our coming to you. Men of skill are always sought after, and we have been informed of your ability.

SGANARELLE

'T is true, sirs, that I am the first man in the world for making of faggots.

VALERE

Oh, sir . . .

SGANARELLE

I spare no pains, and make them in such fashion there 's no fault to be found.

VALERE

Sir, that is not the point.

SGANARELLE

But then, I sell them at a hundred and ten sous per hundred.

VALERE

Do not say such things, I beg you.

SGANARELLE

I assure you I can't sell them for less.

VALERE

Sir, we know what is what.

SGANARELLE

If you know what 's what, then you know that 's my price.

VALERE

Sir, you are fooling with us to . . .

SGANARELLE

I 'm not fooling at all ; I can't come down one bit.

VALERE

Let us change our tone, I beg you.

SGANARELLE

You may get them cheaper somewhere else ; there are faggots and faggots; but for those that I make . . .

VALERE

Oh, sir, let us talk no more of it.

SGANARELLE

I swear you shall not have them for a sou less.

VALERE

Oh! fie!

SGANARELLE

No, on my conscience ; that is what you must pay. I mean just what I say, and I 'm not the man to overcharge you.

VALERE

My dear sir, how can a person like you waste his time in such cheap pretences, and lower himself so far as to speak thus! How can so learned a man, so famous a doctor as you are, choose to hide himself from the eyes of the world, and keep his great talents buried!

SGANARELLE, *aside*

The man 's mad.

VALERE

Pray, sir, do not keep up this farce with us.

SGANARELLE

What?

LUCAS

All this gammon bean't no good; we knows what we knows.

SGANARELLE

How? What? What are you driving at? Who do you take me for?

VALERE

For what you are, for a great doctor.

SGANARELLE

Doctor yourself! I 'm no doctor, and never was.

VALERE, *aside*

His madness is on him. (*Aloud*) Sir, pray do not deny things any longer; and let us not come, I beg you, to unpleasant extremes.

SGANARELLE

To what?

VALERE

To certain measures that we should be very sorry for.

SGANARELLE

Gad! Come to whatever you please! I 'm not a doctor, and I don't know what you 're driving at.

VALERE, *aside*

I see plainly that we must use the medicine. (*Aloud*) Sir, once more, I beg you to admit what you are.

LUCAS

Hey, deuce take it! don't shilly-shally no longer, speak up and own that you be a doctor.

SGANARELLE

This makes me furious.

VALERE

Why deny what every one knows?

LUCAS

Why for 's all this flim-flam? What 's the good of it to you?

SGANARELLE

Gentlemen, in one word as well as in two thousand, I tell you I am not a doctor.

VALERE

You are not a doctor?

SGANARELLE

No.

LUCAS

You bean't a doctor?

SGANARELLE

No, I tell you.

VALERE

Since you will have it so, we must make up our minds to it. (*They both take sticks, and beat him.*)

SGANARELLE

Oh! Oh! Oh! Gentlemen, I am anything you please.

VALERE

Why, sir, do you force us to this violence?

LUCAS

What's the good o' putting us at pains to beat you?

VALERE

I assure you I feel all possible regret for it.

LUCAS

I take my oath I 'm sorry for it, sure I am.

SGANARELLE

What the deuce do you mean, gentlemen? Pray you, is it for a joke, or because you both are daft, that you will have it I 'm a doctor?

VALERE

What! You don't yield yet? Do you persist in denying that you are a doctor?

SGANARELLE

Devil take me if I am!

LUCAS

Bean't it true that you 's a doctor?

SGANARELLE

No, plague choke me! (*They begin again to beat him.*) Oh! Oh! Hold, sirs, enough! since you will have it so, I am a doctor, I am a doctor; apothecary too, an 't please you. I 'll agree to everything rather than be beat to death.

VALERE

Ah! that is good, sir; I am charmed to find you will listen to reason.

LUCAS

It does my heart good when I sees you talk like that.

VALERE

I beg your forgiveness, from the bottom of my heart.

LUCAS

I asks your parding for the freedom.

SGANARELLE, *aside*

Lord, can I be the one that' s mistaken, and can I have become a doctor without knowing it?

VALERE

Sir, you shall not regret discovering to us what you are; and you will certainly find yourself well satisfied for it.

SGANARELLE

But, gentlemen, tell me, may you not be mistaken yourselves? Is it beyond doubt that I am a doctor?

LUCAS

Yes, faith and troth!

SGANARELLE

Really?

VALERE

Beyond all doubt.

SGANARELLE

Devil take me if I knew it!

VALERE

Why, you are the most skilful physician in the world.

SGANARELLE

Oh! Oh!

LUCAS

A doctor that 's cured all kinds of troubles.

SGANARELLE

O Lord!

VALERE

A woman had been thought dead for six hours; she was all ready for burial, when, with a drop of

something or other, you brought her to life, and made her straightway walk about the room.

SGANARELLE

The plague I did!

LUCAS

A little lad of a dozen year old had a fall from the top of a steeple and got his head and his legs and his arms broke, and you, with some nointment or nother, made him get up on his feet 'fore anybody could say Jack Robinson, and run off to play marbles.

SGANARELLE

The deuce I did!

VALERE

In a word, sir, you shall have satisfaction with us, and you shall be paid whatever you please, if you will but let us take you where we want to.

SGANARELLE

I shall be paid whatever I please?

VALERE

Yes.

SGANARELLE

Oh! I am a doctor then, and no mistake. I had forgotten it; but now I remember. What is the affair? Where must I go?

VALERE

We will take you there. It is to see a girl who has lost her speech.

SGANARELLE

Faith, I have n't found it.

VALERE, *aside to Lucas*

He likes his little joke. (*To Sganarelle*) Come along, sir.

SGANARELLE

Without a doctor's gown?

VALERE

We will get one.

SGANARELLE, *giving his bottle to Valère*

You, hold this; that 's where I keep my potions. (*Then, turning toward Lucas and spitting*) You, step on that, by the doctor's orders.

LUCAS

By jink! here's a doctor as I likes. He 's safe to get on, for he 's a jolly dog.

ACT II

SCENE I

GERONTE, VALERE, LUCAS, JACQUELINE

VALERE

Yes, sir, I think you will be satisfied; we have brought you the greatest doctor in the world.

LUCAS

Oh! zooks! Need n't hunt no more, now you 've found *him!* All the others bean't fit to untie his shoes for him.

VALERE

'T is a man who has worked marvellous cures.

LUCAS

Who 's mended folks that was dead.

VALERE

He is a bit capricious, as I told you; and there are times when his wits go wool-gathering and do not show for what they are.

LUCAS

Ay, he likes to play clown; and sometimes a body might say, no offence to you, that he 's got a screw loose in his head.

VALERE

But, at bottom, he is all science; and he often says things quite sublime.

LUCAS

When he puts his mind to 't, he talks right off as if he was reading out of a book.

VALERE

His reputation has already spread abroad in these parts; and everyone waits upon him.

GERONTE

I have a vast desire to see him; send him to me at once.

VALERE

I will go fetch him.

SCENE II

GERONTE, JACQUELINE, LUCAS

JACQUELINE

Faith an' troth, sir, this un 'll do just as good as the rest. I do think 't will be six one and half dozen t' other; and I say the best medicine anybody could give your darter would be a fine handsome husband that she had a fondness for.

GERONTE

Lord bless me, sweet nurse, you are over meddlesome!

LUCAS

Hold your tongue, huzzif Jacqueline; it bean't for you to stick in your oar.

JACQUELINE

I tell ye, and both o' ye, that all these doctors 'll do no more good than clear water; an' your darter wants summat else than rhubarb an' senna; and a husband 's a plaster that cures all girls' ailments.

GERONTE

Would anyone burden himself with her now, with the affliction she has? And when I intended to marry her, did she not oppose my will?

JACQUELINE

I should think so; you would n't let her have none but a man she don't like. Why did n't you try Mister Liander, who 'd gotten her heart?—Then she 'd a been mighty obedient; and I 'll warrant now that he 'd take her, thar, just as she be, if you 'd let him have her.

GERONTE

This Léandre is not the right man for her; he 's not rich like the other one.

JACQUELINE

He 's got an uncle who 's ever so rich, an' he 'll be his heredity.

GERONTE

All these riches in prospect seem to me worth no more than an old song. There 's nothing so good as a bird in the hand; and you run a great risk of being

well fooled, if you count on walking in dead men's shoes. Death does n't always have his ears open to the vows and prayers of gentlemen heirs ; and your teeth 'll have time to grow long, if you wait for your living till someone else dies.

JACQUELINE

Well, anyhow, I 've always hearn tell that in marriage, like in everything else, contentment is better than riches. Fathers and mothers have this cursed custom of always asking how much hev he got, an' how much hev she got. There 's old neighbour Peter that went an' married his girl Simonette to fat Tammas, 'cause he had a bit of a vineyard more than young Robin that she 'd set her heart on ; and now look at the poor thing, gone as yellow as a quince, and hev' n't got no good of anything ever since. There 's a fine warning for you, Master. Nothing 's any good in this world unless you 're happy ; and I 'd rather give my darter a lusty husband that she liked, than all the riches of India.

GERONTE

Plague on it, good Mrs. Nurse, how you do run on! Hold your peace, I pray you; you take too much upon yourself ; and you 'll overheat your milk.

LUCAS

(*While speaking to Jacqueline, he keeps strikiug Géronte on the chest.*)

Gazooks! Hold your tongue! you 're an impudent hussy. Master has no need for your preachments, he knows his own business. You mind yours, and go nurse your baby, 'thout argyfyin' so much.

Master 's the father of his own darter, and he 's a kind man and a wise one, and knows what 's good for her.

GERONTE

Oh! Gently! Hold! Stop!

LUCAS, *still striking Géronte*

Master, I 'll mortify her a bit, and learn her the respect she owes you.

GERONTE

Yes, but you need not gesticulate so.

SCENE III

VALERE, SGANARELLE, GERONTE, LUCAS, JACQUELINE

VALERE

Sir, prepare yourself. Here comes our doctor.

GERONTE, *to Sganarelle*

Sir, I am charmed to receive you, for we are in great need of you.

SGANARELLE, *in doctor's gown, and with a high-crowned and very pointed hat*

Hippocrates says . . . let us both put on our hats.

GERONTE

Hippocrates says that?

SGANARELLE

Yes.

GERONTE

In what chapter, if you please?

SGANARELLE

In his chapter—on hats.

GERONTE

Since Hippocrates says so, it must be done.

SGANARELLE

Doctor, since I have learned of the marvellous cures . . .

GERONTE

To whom are you speaking, pray?

SGANARELLE

To you.

GERONTE

I am no doctor.

SGANARELLE

You are not a doctor?

GERONTE

No, indeed.

SGANARELLE

Do you mean it?

GERONTE

I do mean it. (*Sganarelle takes a cudgel and beats Géronte just as he had been beaten himself.*) Oh! Oh! Oh!

SGANARELLE

You are a doctor now; I never had any other degree.

GERONTE, *to Valère*

What ruffian of a fellow have you brought me here?

VALERE

Remember, I told you he was a droll sort of doctor.

GERONTE

Yes, but I will send him packing with his drolleries.

LUCAS

Don't mind a little thing like that, Master; it 's only his bit of a joke.

GERONTE

This style of joking does n't suit me.

SGANARELLE

Sir, I beg your pardon for the liberty I have taken.

GERONTE

Sir, I am your humble servant.

SGANARELLE

I am exceedingly sorry . . .

GERONTE

Oh, it 's nothing at all.

SGANARELLE

For the cudgelling . . .

GERONTE

There is no harm done.

SGANARELLE

Which I have had the honour to give you.

GERONTE

Let us say no more of it. Sir, I have a daughter who is fallen into a strange sickness.

SGANARELLE

I am overjoyed, sir, that your daughter has need of me; and I could wish with all my heart that you needed me too, you yourself and all your family, that I might prove to you my eager desire to serve you.

GERONTE

I am obliged to you for your good wishes.

SGANARELLE

I assure you that I speak from the bottom of my heart.

GERONTE

You do me too much honour.

SGANARELLE

What is your daughter's name?

GERONTE

Lucinde.

SGANARELLE

Lucinde! Oh! a fine name to practise on! Lucinde!

GERONTE

I 'll just go and see what she is about.

SGANARELLE

Who is that fine big woman?

GERONTE

She 's the nurse to a young child of mine.

SCENE IV

SGANARELLE, JACQUELINE, LUCAS

SGANARELLE, *aside*

The deuce! That is a handsome piece of furniture! (*Aloud*) Oh! nurse, charming nurse, my doctory is the most humble slave of your nursery, and I would I were the lucky little bantling to suck the milk (*he puts his hand on her breast*) of your good graces. All my medicine, all my knowledge, all my skill, is at your service; and . . .

LUCAS

By your good leave, Master Doctor, let my wife alone, I say.

SGANARELLE

What! Is she your wife?

LUCAS

Yes.

SGANARELLE

Oh ! Really, I did not know that, and I am over-

joyed for love of both of you. (*He makes as if he would embrace Lucas, and, turning round to the nurse, embraces her instead.*)

LUCAS, *pulling Sganarelle away*

Stop that, I say.

SGANARELLE

I assure you I am delighted to see you joined together; I congratulate her on having a husband such as you are; (*Again he makes as if to embrace Lucas, and, slipping under his arms, throws himself upon the nurse's neck*) and I congratulate you, dear sir, on having a wife so handsome, so honest, and so buxom as she is.

LUCAS, *pulling him away again*

Hey! zooks! don't be so free with your compliments, d' ye hear?

SGANARELLE

Would you not have me rejoice with you in such a well-matched union?

LUCAS

With me as much as you like; but with my wife, not so much ceremonies.

SGANARELLE

I take an equal interest in both your good fortunes; (*The same by-play is repeated*) and if I embrace you to show you my joy therein, I embrace her to show likewise the same joy to her.

LUCAS, *pulling him away for the third time*

Oh! 'S bodikins, Mr. Doctor, what a deal o' nonsense!

SCENE V

GERONTE, SGANARELLE, LUCAS, JACQUELINE

GERONTE

Sir, my daughter will be here presently.

SGANARELLE

I await her, sir, with all my medicine.

GERONTE

Where is it?

SGANARELLE, *touching his forehead*

Within here.

GERONTE

'T is very well.

SGANARELLE, *trying to touch the nurse's breasts*

But, since I take such an interest in all your family, I must just try your nurse's milk a bit, and inspect her bosom.

LUCAS, *pulling him away, and whirling him round*

Nay, nay; I 'll not stand that.

SGANARELLE

'T is the doctor's duty to see the nurse's nipples.

LUCAS

Don't duty me no duties, say I, by your leave, sir.

SGANARELLE

Are you so bold as to oppose the doctor's orders? Out o' the way with you!

LUCAS

I don't care a snap for no doctor!

SGANARELLE, *eyeing him askance*

I 'll give you the fever.

JACQUELINE, *taking Lucas by the arm, and whirling him round likewise*

Now you get out too; bean't I big enough to defend my own self, if he does anything to me he hed n't ought to?

LUCAS

I won't have him a-handling of you, I won't.

SGANARELLE

Fie on the lout, he 's jealous of his wife!

GERONTE

Here comes my daughter.

SCENE VI

LUCINDE, GERONTE, SGANARELLE, VALERE, LUCAS, JACQUELINE

SGANARELLE

Is this the patient?

GERONTE

Yes. She is my only daughter; and I should be mortally sorry if she were to die.

SGANARELLE

Let her see to it she does n't! She must not die without the doctor's prescription.

GERONTE

Bring a chair, here.

SGANARELLE, *seated between Géronte and Lucinde*

'T is a patient that 's not so repulsive; I maintain that a man in full health might make shift to get on with her.

GERONTE

You have made her laugh, sir.

SGANARELLE

So much the better; when the doctor makes the patient laugh, 't is the best symptom in the world. (*To Lucinde*) Well! what 's the matter? What ails you? Where 's the pain?

LUCINDE *answers by signs, putting her hand to her lips and her head, and under her chin*

Haw, he, ho, haw.

SGANARELLE

Eh? What do you say?

LUCINDE *continues the same gestures*

Haw, he, ho, haw, haw, he, ho.

SGANARELLE

What?

LUCINDE

Haw, he, ho.

SGANARELLE, *imitating her*

Haw, he, ho, haw, ha. I don't understand you. What deuced language is this?

GERONTE

Sir, that is just her ailment. She has gone dumb, and as yet no one has been able to find out the reason of it; and this unfortunate incident has caused her marriage to be put off.

SGANARELLE

But why?

GERONTE

The man who is to marry her prefers to wait till she is cured before he binds himself.

SGANARELLE

And who's this blockhead, that does n't want his wife to be dumb? Would to God that mine had that ailment! I 'd take good care not to have her cured.

GERONTE

In a word, sir, we beg you to employ your utmost skill to relieve her affliction.

SGANARELLE

Oh! don't give yourself any concern about that. Just tell me: does this malady oppress her very much?

GERONTE

Yes, sir.

SGANARELLE

All the better. Does she feel any great pain?

GERONTE

Very great.

SGANARELLE

That is excellent. Does she go —— you know where?

GERONTE

Yes.

SGANERELLE

Freely?

GERONTE

I understand nothing of that.

SGANARELLE

Is the matter laudable?

GERONTE

I am no expert in these things.

SGANARELLE, *turning toward the patient*

Give me your arm. (*To Géronte*) Here 's a pulse which shows—that your daughter is dumb.

GERONTE

Why! Yes sir, that is her ailment; you have found it out at once.

SGANARELLE

Ha! ha!

JACQUELINE

Just see how he guessed what ailed her!

SGANARELLE

We great doctors know things instantly. An ignoramus would have been puzzled, and would have beat about the bush, and said: "'T is this, 't is that"; not so I—I hit the mark at the first shot, and I inform you—that your daughter is dumb.

GERONTE

Yes; but I would you could tell me whence it comes.

SGANARELLE

There is nothing easier; it comes from her having lost her speech.

GERONTE

Very good. But what is the cause, I pray you, that has made her to lose her speech?

SGANARELLE

All our best authors will tell you that 't is an impediment in the action of her tongue.

GERONTE

But once more, what are your ideas upon this impediment in the action of her tongue?

SGANARELLE

Aristotle, on that head, says . . . mighty fine things.

GERONTE

I believe you.

SGANARELLE

Ah! he was a great man!

GERONTE

There is no doubt of it.

SGANARELLE

Altogether a great man ; (*Holding out his arm from the elbow*) a man who was greater than I am by fully that much. But, to come back to our argument, I hold that this impediment in the action of her tongue is caused by certain humours which we men of science call peccant humours ; peccant, that is to say . . . peccant humours ; inasmuch as the vapours formed by the exhalations of the influences that arise in the region of distempers, coming . . . so to speak . . . to . . . Do you understand Latin?

GERONTE

Not in the least.

SGANARELLE, *starting up*

You don't understand Latin ?

GERONTE

No.

SGANARELLE, *taking various comic poses*

Cabricias arci thuram, catalamus, singulariter, nominativo, haec Musa "the Muse," *bonus, bona, bonum, Deus sanctus, estne oratio latinas ? Etiam,* "Yes." *Quare ?* "Why?" *Quia substantivo et adjectivum concordat in generi, numerum, et casus.*

GERONTE

Ah ! why did I not study?

JACQUELINE

What a clever man is that !

LUCAS

Yes, it 's so fine I don't understand no jot of it.

SGANARELLE

Now, these vapours I tell you of, passing from the left side, where the liver is, to the right side, where the heart is, it happens that the lung, which we call in Latin *armyan*, having connection with the brain, which we name in Greek *nasmus*, by means of the hollow vein, which we denominate in the Hebrew *cubile*, meets on its way the said vapours which fill the ventricles of the omoplate; and because the said vapours . . . follow my reasoning closely, I beg you; and because the said vapours have a certain malignity . . . listen carefully to this, I adjure you.

GERONTE

Yes.

SGANARELLE

Have a certain malignity which is caused . . . pay attention, if you please.

GERONTE

I am doing so.

SGANARELLE

Which is caused by the acridity of the humours engendered in the concavity of the diaphragm, it comes to pass that these vapours . . . *Ossabandus*, *nequeis*, *nequer*, *potarinum*, *quipsa milus*. And that is exactly why your daughter is dumb.

JACQUELINE

Oh! how fine that was spoke, my man!

LUCAS

If I had but as free a tongue as him!

GERONTE

'T is impossible to reason better, I am sure. Only one thing gave me pause: 't is the whereabouts of the liver and the heart. Methinks you placed them otherwise than as they are; and that the heart is on the left side, and the liver on the right.

SGANARELLE

Yes, that used to be so; but we have changed all that; and now we practise medicine in an entirely new fashion.

GERONTE

Ah!—I did not know that, I beg your pardon for my ignorance.

SGANARELLE

There is no harm done; you are not under obligation to be as learned as we are.

GERONTE

Certainly not. But, sir, what think you we must do for this malady!

SGANARELLE

What I think we must do?

GERONTE

Yes.

SGANARELLE

My opinion is that she should be put back in bed,

and made to take as medicine plenty of bread dipt in wine.

GERONTE

Why that, sir?

SGANARELLE

Because there is in wine and bread, taken together, a sympathetic virtue that loosens the tongue. Do you not know that they give nothing but this to parrots, who learn to talk by eating it?

GERONTE

That is true! Oh! what a great man! Quick, plenty of bread and wine.

SGANARELLE

I will come back toward evening to see how she is.

SCENE VII

GERONTE, SGANARELLE, JACQUELINE

SGANARELLE, *to Jacqueline*

You, stay a bit. (*To Géronte*) Sir, here is a nurse to whom I must apply some little remedies.

JACQUELINE

Who? me? I 'm as sound as a roach.

SGANARELLE

So much the worse, nurse; so much the worse. This high health is a dangerous thing, and 't will not be amiss to give you a little gentle bleeding and to administer to you some slight mollifying injection.

GERONTE

But, sir, that is a method which I do not understand. Why be bled when one is not ill?

SGANARELLE

No matter. The method is a salutary one; and, just as we drink for the thirst to come, so must we be bled for the illness to come.

JACQUELINE, *going*

Faith, I care naught for that, and I won't go and make a 'pothecary shop o' my carcase.

SGANARELLE

You rebel against medicine; but we shall find a way to bring you to reason.

SCENE VIII

GERONTE, SGANARELLE

SGANARELLE

I give you good day.

GERONTE

Wait a little, please.

SGANARELLE

What do you want?

GERONTE

To give you your fee, sir.

SGANARELLE, *holding out his hand behind him from under his gown, while Géronte is opening his purse*

I shall take none, sir.

GERONTE

Sir . . .

SGANARELLE

By no means.

GERONTE

Just a moment.

SGANARELLE

Not for anything.

GERONTE

I pray you!

SGANARELLE

What an idea!

GERONTE

There you have it.

SGANARELLE

I shall not take it.

GERONTE

Oh!

SGANARELLE

'T is not for money I practise.

GERONTE

I believe you.

SGANARELLE, *having taken the money*

Is this full weight?

GERONTE

Yes, sir.

SGANARELLE

I am not a mercenary doctor.

GERONTE

I am sure of that.

SGANARELLE

I am not governed by self-interest.

GERONTE

Far be it from me to think so.

SGANARELLE, *alone, looking at the money he has received*

Faith, this is not so bad; and if only . . .

SCENE IX

LEANDRE, SGANARELLE

LEANDRE, *to Sganarelle*

Sir, I have been waiting for you a long while; I have come to beseech your assistance.

SGANARELLE, *taking his wrist*

This is a very bad pulse.

LEANDRE

I am not ill, sir; that is not what I have come to you for.

SGANARELLE

If you are not ill, why the deuce don't you say so?

LEANDRE

No. To tell you in a word how things stand, my

name is Léandre, and I am in love with Lucinde, to whom you have just paid a visit; and since, through the ill-will of her father, it is impossible for me to come near her, I venture to beg that you will be so good as to serve my love, and give me the chance to carry out a stratagem I have invented in order to say to her a few words on which my happiness and my life absolutely depend.

SGANARELLE, *pretending to be angry*

For whom do you take me? How dare you come to me to serve you in your love-affair, and try to debase the dignity of a doctor to such low uses?

LEANDRE

Sir, don't make a disturbance.

SGANARELLE, *driving him back*

I will make a disturbance. You are an insolent puppy.

LEANDRE

Oh! sir, softly.

SGANARELLE

An ill-advised fool.

LEANDRE

I beg you!

SGANARELLE

I will teach you that I am not that kind of a man, and that it is a piece of extreme insolence . . .

LEANDRE, *taking out a purse and giving it to him*

Sir . . .

SGANARELLE

To wish to use me . . . (*Taking the purse*) I am not speaking of you, for you are a gentleman, and I should be charmed to serve you; but there are certain impertinent fellows in the world who go and take people for what they are not; and I tell you frankly that this puts me in a passion.

LEANDRE

I beg your pardon, sir, for the liberty I . . .

SGANARELLE

Do not speak of it. What is it you want?

LEANDRE

You must know, sir, that this illness you are trying to cure is a sham. The doctors have reasoned upon it in fine style, and have not failed to say that it came, one from the brain, one from the bowels, one from the spleen, one from the liver; but 't is certain that love is the true cause of it, and that Lucinde has invented it only to deliver herself from a marriage which was being forced upon her. But, for fear we should be seen together, let us withdraw from here, and I will tell you on the way what I desire of you.

SGANARELLE

Very well, sir; you have inspired me with an inconceivable sensibility for your love; and if I have to spend all my science upon it, the patient shall either give up the ghost or be yours.

ACT III

SCENE I

LEANDRE, SGANARELLE

LEANDRE

Methinks I do not make such a bad apothecary; and, as the father has scarce ever seen me, this change of dress and wig is enough, I imagine, to disguise me from him.

SGANARELLE

No doubt of it.

LEANDRE

All I could wish would be to know five or six long medical terms, to adorn my discourse and give me the air of a learned man.

SGANARELLE

Nonsense, all that is unnecessary; the gown is enough; I know no more of it than you do.

LEANDRE

What!

SGANARELLE

The devil take me if I know a thing about medicine. You are a gentleman, and I will trust you with my secret as you have trusted me with yours.

LEANDRE

What, you are really not . . .

SGANARELLE

No, I tell you; they made me a doctor maugre my teeth, as the old saying goes. I had never thought of being so learned as that; and all my studies had n't gone beyond the sixth class. I don't know what put this notion into their heads, but when I saw they were set on having me be a doctor, I made up my mind to be one, at the expense of whom it may concern. But you would never imagine how the error has spread, and how everybody is possessed to believe me a man of skill. They come for me from all parts; and, if things keep on so, I intend to stick to medicine all my life. I find it the best of all trades, for, whether we do well or ill, we are always paid just the same. We are not held to account for the bad work; and we cut away as we choose in the stuff we work on. A cobbler, making shoes, cannot spoil a scrap of leather without having to pay for the damage; but in our business we can spoil a man without its costing us a penny. The blunders are not put down to us, and the fault is always in him that dies. In short, the good thing about this profession is, that amongst the dead there exists an honour, a discretion, that cannot be surpassed; not one has ever been known to complain of the doctor that despatched him.

LEANDRE

'T is true that the dead are very well-behaved in this respect.

SGANARELLE, *seeing some men coming to him*

Here are some people who look as if they were coming to consult me. (*To Léandre*) Go and wait for me near your lady's house.

SCENE II

THIBAUT, PERRIN, SGANARELLE

THIBAUT

Master, we be come to look for you, son Perrin and me.

SGANARELLE

What is it?

THIBAUT

His poor mother, which her name be Parrette, has been laying sick abed these six months.

SGANARELLE, *holding out his hand as if to receive money*

What would you have me do about it?

THIBAUT

We 'd hev you, Master, to give us some bit of druggery for to cure her.

SGANARELLE

I must see what 't is she 's sick of.

THIBAUT

She 's bad with hypocrisy, Master.

SGANARELLE

With hypocrisy?

THIBAUT

Yes, I mean she be swelled up all over; they say as how 't is from a lot of seriosities she hev got in her inside, and how that her liver, or her belly, or her spleen, whichever you likes to call it, 'stead of makin' blood, don't make nothin' but water. One day out o' two she 've the quotiguian fever, with lassitules and pains in the muzzles of her legs. You 'll hear flumes in her throat that seem like to choke her; and sometimes she 's took with singcups and conversions, so 't we think she 's gone off. We 've got in our village a 'potecary, savin' y'r presence, that 's give her no knowin' how much of his stuff; and it 've cost me more 'n a dozen good crowns in drenches, askin' your pardon, and in apostumes 't he makes her take, in hyacinth infections and in cordal portions. And all that, as t' other man said, wa' n't nowt but a nointment of wish-wash. He was after givin' her a kind of drug they call a metal wine[1]; but I was afeard, I tell ye, it might send her straight to kingdom come; for they do say that these great doctors kill no end of folks with that same invention.

SGANARELLE, *still holding out his hand and shaking it to show that he wants money*

To the point, my friend, to the point.

[1] Emetic wine—the same drug of which Don Juan's Sganarelle tells such marvels. (See Vol. I, pp. 108–9.) Its use had become very popular since 1658, when it had (supposedly) cured the young King Louis XIV. of a serious illness. It was a preparation of antimony. The other mistakes of Thibaut, such as "cordal portions" for "cordial potions," hardly need more explanation than Sganarelle later gives them.

THIBAUT

The point is, Master, that we be come to beg you to tell us what us mun do.

SGANARELLE

I don't understand you at all.

PERRIN

Master, my mother is sick; and here be two crowns we hev brought you to give us some cure.

SGANARELLE

Ah! now *you* I understand. There 's a lad that speaks clearly, and expresses himself in proper style. You say your mother is sick of a dropsy; that she 's swollen all over her body, that she has a fever, with pains in her legs; and that she is sometimes seized with syncopes and convulsions, that is to say, with fainting fits.

PERRIN

Why yes, Master, 't is just so.

SGANARELLE

I understood your words from the first. You have a father who does not know what he is talking about. Now you want a remedy?

PERRIN

Yes, Master.

SGANARELLE

A remedy to cure her?

PERRIN

That is how we mean.

SGANARELLE

Here, here is a piece of cheese that you must make her take.

PERRIN

Cheese, Master?

SGANARELLE

Yes, 't is a prepared cheese, in which there is mixed gold, coral, pearls, and abundance of other precious things.

PERRIN

Master, we be mortal beholden to you; and we 'll go make her take it presently.

SGANARELLE

Go. If she dies, do not fail to have her buried as handsomely as you can.

SCENE III

JACQUELINE, SGANARELLE; LUCAS, *at the back of the stage*

SGANARELLE

Here comes the handsome nurse. Ah! nurse of my heart, I am overjoyed at this meeting; and the sight of you is the rhubarb, the cassia, and the senna that purge away all melancholy from my soul.

JACQUELINE

Body o' me, Master Doctor, that 's too fine talk for me, I don't understand no word of all your Latin.

SGANARELLE

Fall sick, nurse, I beg you; fall sick, for love of me. 'T would give me all the joy in the world to cure you.

JACQUELINE

Your humble sarvent, sir; I 'd rather not hev to be cured.

SGANARELLE

How I pity you, fair nurse, for having such a jealous nuisance of a husband.

JACQUELINE

What can a body do, sir? 'T is a penance for my sins; where the goat is tied, e'en there must she browse.

SGANARELLE

What! such a clodhopper! a man who 's always watching you, and won't even let anybody speak to you!

JACQUELINE

Alas! you hev n't seen nothing of it yet; that 's only a small sample of his tantrums.

SGANARELLE

Is it possible? And can a man have so base a soul as to ill-use such a woman as you? Ah! but I know some, fair nurse, and not far away either, who would hold themselves happy to kiss even the tiny tips of your tootsies! Why has fate let a beauty so buxom fall into such hands? a mere brute, a boor, a

lout, a numskull . . . Forgive me, nurse, if I speak thus of your husband.

JACQUELINE

Eh, sir! I knows well enough he desarves all those names.

SGANARELLE

Yes, surely, nurse, he deserves them; and what 's more, 't would be but his deserts if you put on his head something to punish him for his suspicions.

JACQUELINE

'T is true that if I did n't always mind nothing but his interest, he might drive me to do something queer.

SGANARELLE

On my word, you 'd not do ill to revenge yourself on him with someone. 'T is a man, I tell you, who richly deserves it; and if I were lucky enough, fair nurse, to be chosen to . . . (*At this point, seeing Lucas, who was behind them listening to their conversation, they start aside and go off in opposite directions, the doctor with much comical by-play.*)

SCENE IV

GERONTE, LUCAS

GERONTE

Oh! Lucas! have n't you seen our doctor here?

LUCAS

'Deed I have, deuce take it, I seen him, and my wife too.

GERONTE

Where can he be then?

LUCAS

I dunno; but I wish he were gone to all the devils.

GERONTE

You go and find out about my daughter.

SCENE V

SGANARELLE, LEANDRE, GERONTE

GERONTE

Ah! sir, I was asking where you were.

SGANARELLE

I had just stopped in your yard to expel the superfluity of drink. How is the patient?

GERONTE

A little worse since your medicine.

SGANARELLE

So much the better; 't is a sign it is taking effect.

GERONTE

Yes; but I am afraid that while taking effect it may finish her.

SGANARELLE

Don't worry. I have medicines that make mockery

of all extremities, and I look forward to seeing her at her last gasp.

GERONTE, *pointing to Léandre*

Who is this man you have with you?

SGANARELLE, *making signs to show he is an apothecary*

'T is . . .

GERONTE

What?

SGANARELLE

The one . . .

GERONTE

Eh?

SGANARELLE

Who . . .

GERONTE

I see.

SGANARELLE

Your daughter will need him.

SCENE VI

LUCINDE, GERONTE, LEANDRE, JACQUELINE, SGANARELLE

JACQUELINE

Master, here 's your darter, as wants to walk a bit.

SGANARELLE

'T will do her good. You, Mr. Apothecary, just

go and feel her pulse, so that I may talk with you presently about her ailment. (*At this point he draws Géronte aside to a corner of the stage, and passing one arm over his shoulder, puts his hand under his chin, and so makes him turn around toward himself whenever he tries to see what his daughter and the apothecary are doing together; meanwhile speaking to him as follows, to hold his attention:*) Sir, 't is a great and subtle question among the learned, whether women are easier to cure than men. I beg you to listen to this, please. Some say no, others say yes, and I say both yes and no; inasmuch as the incongruity of the opaque humours which meet together in the natural temperament of woman, being cause that the sensual part is always seeking to gain ascendancy over that which hath sense, we see it result that the variability of their opinions depends upon the oblique movement of the circle of the moon; and since the sun, which darts its rays upon the concavity of the earth, finds . . .

LUCINDE, *to Léandre*

No, I am absolutely incapable of changing my sentiments.

GERONTE

My daughter speaks! O marvellous medicine! O admirable doctor! How deeply obliged to you I am, sir, for this wonderful cure! What can I do for you after such a service?

SGANARELLE, *walking about the stage, and wiping his forehead*

This distemper has cost me a vast deal of pains!

LUCINDE

Yes, father, I have recovered my speech ; but it 's only to tell you that I shall never have any husband but Léandre, and that it's useless for you to try to make me marry Horace.

GERONTE

But . . .

LUCINDE

Nothing can possibly shake my resolve.

GERONTE

What !

LUCINDE

'T will be useless to oppose me with fine arguments.

GERONTE

If . . .

LUCINDE

All your rhetoric will serve no purpose.

GERONTE

I . . .

LUCINDE

'T is a thing on which my mind is made up.

GERONTE

But . . .

LUCINDE

No paternal power can compel me to marry against my will.

GERONTE

I have . . .

LUCINDE

All your efforts will fail.

GERONTE

It . . .

LUCINDE

My heart can never submit to such tyranny.

GERONTE

There . . .

LUCINDE

And I 'll rather cast myself into a convent than marry a man I do not love.

GERONTE

But . . .

LUCINDE, *fairly shouting*

No. By no manner of means. Not for anything. You are wasting your breath. I 'll do nothing of the sort. That is settled.

GERONTE

Oh! what a torrent of words! There 's no standing up against it. (*To Sganarelle*) Sir, I beseech you to make her dumb again.

SGANARELLE

That is impossible. All I can do for you is to make you deaf, if you like.

GERONTE

Many thanks. (*Turning to Lucinde*) Do you expect . . .

LUCINDE

No. All your arguments will have no effect upon me.

GERONTE

You shall marry Horace this very evening.

LUCINDE

I will marry Death sooner.

SGANARELLE, *to Géronte*

Heavens! Wait a bit: let me medicine the matter; 't is a disease that is on her, and I know what remedy must be applied.

GERONTE

Can it be, sir, that you are able to cure this distemper of the mind also?

SGANARELLE

Yes; trust me for it, I have remedies for everything; and our apothecary will help us with this cure. (*He calls the apothecary.*) A word with you. You see that the passion she has for this Léandre is completely contrary to her father's will; that there is no time to be lost, that the humours are greatly aggravated, and that we must promptly find out a remedy for the disorder, since it might grow worse with delay. For my part, I can see but one, and that is a dose of purgative flight, which you will mix properly with two drachms of matrimonium in

pills. Perhaps she will object to taking this medicine; but as you are a skilful man in your business, 't is for you to bring her to it, and get her to swallow the thing as best you may. Go and make her take a turn in the garden, to prepare the humours, while I hold her father in conversation here; but above all, lose no time. To the remedy, quick! to the specific remedy!

SCENE VII

GERONTE, SGANARELLE

GERONTE

What drugs, sir, are those you have just mentioned? It seems to me I have never heard their names before.

SGANARELLE

Certain drugs which are used in cases of urgent necessity.

GERONTE

Have you ever seen insolence the like of hers?

SGANARELLE

Girls are sometimes a bit headstrong.

GERONTE

You would never believe how infatuated she is with this Léandre.

SGANARELLE

The heat of the blood causes such things in young people.

GERONTE

For my part, from the moment I discovered the violence of this passion, I had the sense to keep my girl shut up.

SGANARELLE

You acted wisely.

GERONTE

I saw to it that they should have no communication with each other.

SGANARELLE

You were right.

GERONTE

Some folly would have come of it, if I had allowed them to see each other.

SGANARELLE

Certainly.

GERONTE

And I think the girl would have been capable of running away with him.

SGANARELLE

You reason like a sage.

GERONTE

I have learned that he is doing his utmost to get speech of her.

SGANARELLE

The rascal!

GERONTE

But he will waste his time.

SGANARELLE

Ay! ay!

GERONTE

I shall take good care he does not see her.

SGANARELLE

'T is no fool he has to do with, and you know a trick or two he kens not of. A man must get up betimes to catch you napping.

SCENE VIII

LUCAS, GERONTE, SGANARELLE

LUCAS

Oh! gadzooks, Master, here 's a fine kettle o' fish! Your darter 's been and run off with her Liander. 'T was he that played the 'pothecary, and there be Master Doctor who done this pretty operation.

GERONTE

What! murder me in this fashion! Here, a constable, and don't let him get out. Ah! traitor, I will make you suffer the law.

LUCAS

Ay, faith, Master Doctor, you shall be hanged; only don't you budge from here.[1]

[1] The joyous hope of Lucas is not altogether unfounded; for in ancient criminal law "abductors and their accomplices" were actually in danger of capital punishment.

SCENE IX

MARTINE, SGANARELLE, LUCAS

MARTINE, *to Lucas*

Oh heavens! what a deal of trouble have I had to find this house! Pray tell me some news of the doctor I sent you to.

LUCAS

Here he be, just a-goin' to be hanged.

MARTINE

What! my husband hanged! Alas! and what has he done to come to that?

LUCAS

He 's been and got our master's darter carried off.

MARTINE

Alas! my dear husband, is it really true that they are going to hang you?

SGANARELLE

You see. Alas!

MARTINE

Must you die, before so many people?

SGANARELLE

What would you have me do?

MARTINE

Ah! if you had but finished a-cutting of our wood, I might take some comfort in it.

SGANARELLE

Begone from here, you break my heart.

MARTINE

No; I will stay to encourage you to die. I will not leave you till I 've seen you hanged.

SGANARELLE

Alas!

SCENE X

GERONTE, SGANARELLE, MARTINE

GERONTE, *to Sganarelle*

The constable will be here presently, and you shall be put in a safe place where they 'll answer to me for you.

SGANARELLE, *on his knees, the high pointed hat in his hand.*

Alas! won't a little cudgelling do instead?

GERONTE

No, no; the law shall take its course. But what do I see?

SCENE XI

GERONTE, LEANDRE, LUCINDE, SGANARELLE, LUCAS, MARTINE

LEANDRE

Sir, I am come to bring Léandre before you, and to give Lucinde back into your power. We had intended to run away together, and be married; but

this intention has given place to a more honourable procedure. I would not steal your daughter away from you : 't is from your own hand alone I will receive her. What I would say to you, sir, is that I have just now received letters which inform me that my uncle is dead, and that I am the heir to all his property.

GERONTE [*whose stick was uplifted over Léandre, lowers it and at the same time himself bows low to the ground.*] Sir, your virtue holds an ample place in my esteem, and I give you my daughter with all the joy in the world.

SGANARELLE, *aside*

Medicine has had a close shave !

MARTINE

Since you are not to be hanged, thank me for making you a doctor, for 't is I who got you that honour.

SGANARELLE

Yes ! 't is you who got me no end of cudgelling.

LEANDRE, *to Sganarelle*

The result is too happy for you to harbour any grudge.

SGANARELLE

So be it, then. (*To Martine*) I forgive you those blows, in consideration of the dignity to which you raised me ; but prepare to live henceforth in great respect toward a man of my consequence, and remember that the wrath of a doctor is greatly to be feared.

L'AVARE

COMEDIE EN CINQ ACTES

9 SEPTEMBRE, 1668

THE MISER

A COMEDY IN FIVE ACTS

SEPTEMBER 9, 1668

(*The original is in prose*)

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The miser is one of the eternal types of literature, and in the seventeenth century it was one of the commonest: we find it, for instance, in Boileau's *Satires*, La Fontaine's *Fables* and *Tales*, Tallemant Des Reaux' *Anecdotes*, and La Bruyère's *Characters*. Evidently the vice of avarice must have been common in real life at that time. It seems probable that Molière's own father was not free from it; and Molière may have known other examples: as in the Seigneur de Bersy, a noble usurer who (according to Tallemant) once found his profligate son seeking to borrow from him; or in the Lieutenant-criminel Tardieu and his wife, about whom countless stories were told. They were rich (Madame Tardieu's marriage portion was 300,000 francs), but the husband, wife, and mother-in-law, living together, kept only one servant, a coachman and man-of-all-work. Their horses were so wretchedly fed (the oats being portioned out by the mother-in-law) that they could hardly drag the dilapidated coach. The Lieutenant-criminel always dined out, at the expense of his clients or of those whose vice he protected, while the women lived at home, mostly on goats' milk. Finally Tardieu and his wife were killed in their own house, probably by robbers, about two years before Molière's *Miser* was written.

It seems probable, then, that Molière borrowed some of the features of his play directly from real life. In any case it is certain that *The Miser* is indebted to more different literary sources than any other of his plays: to

Plautus, Ariosto, Larivey, Boisrobert, Quinault, Scarron, Chevalier, Chappuzeau, and probably some of the Italian impromptu comedies of his time. All these elements he has combined into a single and unified composition. He differs from his chief predecessor, Plautus, in that he gives us not the bare type of a sordid vice, but the picture of a peculiar individual dominated by this vice, an individual compelled to keep up a certain position in society, and constantly torn between his passion of avarice and the demands of his station; and moreover, in love, and the rival of his own son. Molière, too, is the first dramatist who has really treated the modern question of money, and laid emphasis on the harm which excessive love of it can do in the family and in society. In this he has had many successors, from Le Sage to Dumas Fils.

Molière is superior both to his predecessors and to his followers by the overflowing power of his comic spirit. This is sometimes hardly appreciated in the reading of the play, but it always comes out with dominating force on the stage. Scenes like that of the memorandum, or "without a dowry," never fail of their effect; nor do those between father and son, or that of the lost strong-box, where comedy that is almost farce still seems only a step removed from tragedy. So that even when full allowance has been made for the stilted style and conventional structure of the love scenes, and for the wretchedly patched-up ending of the play, *The Miser* must still count among his best dramas. Goethe has said on it, as on so many other things, the final word: "Molière is so great that you are newly amazed every time you re-read him. He is unique; his plays border on the tragic, ... and are beyond imitation. His *Miser* especially, in which the contest between father and son destroys all natural piety, is of unusual grand-

eur, and in a high sense tragic. . . I always read a few of Molière's plays every year, just as I often look over the engravings from great Italian masters. For we tiny men are not capable of retaining in our minds the greatness of such things as these, and must therefore return to them constantly, to renew their impression upon us."

CHARACTERS	ACTORS [1]
HARPAGON, father of Cléante and Elise, and suitor of Mariane	MOLIERE
CLEANTE, son of Harpagon, in love with Mariane	
ELISE, daughter of Harpagon, in love with Valère	Mlle. DEBRIE
VALERE, son of Anselme, in love with Elise	LA GRANGE
MARIANE, in love with Cléante, and loved by Harpagon	Mlle. MOLIERE
ANSELME, father of Valère and Mariane	
FROSINE, a woman of intrigue	MADELEINE BEJART
MASTER SIMON, a broker	
MASTER JACQUES, cook and coachman to Harpagon	DU CROISY
LA FLECHE, valet to Cléante	LOUIS BEJART
MISTRESS CLAUDE, servant to Harpagon	
BRINDAVOINE, LA MERLUCHE, } lackeys of Harpagon	
A Police Magistrate and his Clerk	

Scene, Paris, in Harpagon's house

[1] The distribution of the rôles is conjectural, except for those of Harpagon and La Flèche.

THE MISER

A COMEDY

ACT I

SCENE I

VALERE, ELISE

VALERE

What! my charming Elise, you grow sad, after the dear assurance you have given me of your love? I find you sighing, alas! in the midst of my joy! Tell me, do you regret having made me happy? and do you repent of the promise which my passion has won from you?

ELISE

No, Valère, I cannot repent of anything I do for you. I feel myself forced to it by too dear a compulsion, and I have not the strength even to wish that things were different. But, to tell the truth, I am anxious about the outcome; and I very much fear that I love you a little more than I ought.

VALERE

Ah! what can you have to fear, Elise, from your goodness to me?

ELISE

Alas! a hundred things at once; the anger of my father, the reproaches of my family, the harsh judgment of the world; but more than all, Valère, a change in your heart, and that cruel coldness with which your sex so often repays the too ardent expression of an innocent love.

VALERE

Oh! do not wrong me so much as to judge me by others! Suspect me of anything, Elise, rather than of failing in what I owe to you. I love you too much for that; and my love for you shall last as long as my life.

ELISE

Ah! Valère, every one says the same. Men are all alike in their words; and 't is only their acts that show them to be different.

VALERE

Then since nothing but acts can prove what we are, wait, at least, till you can judge of my heart by them, and do not seek out crimes for me in the groundless fears of a tormenting foresight. Do not slay me, I beseech you, with the bitter wounds of a suspicion that wrongs me; but give me time to convince you, by a thousand and yet again a thousand proofs, of the loyalty of my love.

ELISE

Oh! how easily we let ourselves be persuaded by those we love! Yes, Valère, I think your heart is incapable of deceiving me. I believe you love me truly, and will be loyal to me; I will not so

much as doubt it, and I 'll confine my anxiety to dread of the blame that may fall upon me.

VALERE

But why this anxiety?

ELISE

I should have nothing to fear, if every one could see you with my eyes; and I find in you enough to justify everything I do for you. My heart has your merit for its defence, aided by that gratitude toward you which Heaven itself has laid upon me. I picture to myself, each hour of the day, that frightful danger which first made us known to each other; that admirable nobility with which you risked your life to save mine from the fury of the waves; that tender care which you gave me after rescuing me from the water, and the constant homage of that ardent love which neither time nor difficulties have discouraged, and which, making you neglect both kindred and country, detains you here, keeps your true station concealed for my sake, and has even brought you to assume the position of my father's steward in order to be near me. All this, no doubt, has influenced me strongly; 't is enough to justify in my own eyes the engagement to which I have consented; but perhaps it is not enough to justify it to others, and I am not sure that the world will share my judgment.

VALERE

Among all these things you speak of, it is only my love that makes any claim upon you; and as to the scruples you feel, your father himself takes only too

much care to justify you before the world; his excessive avarice and his austere treatment of his children might justify yet stranger things. Forgive me, dear Elise, for speaking so of him to you. You know that on this subject nothing good can be said. However, if I can, as I hope, find my relatives again, 't will give us no great pains to win him over. I am impatiently awaiting news of them, and if it does not come soon, I shall go seek for it myself.

ELISE

Oh! Valère, do not stir from here, I beg you; and think only of how to ingratiate yourself in my father's favour.

VALERE

You have seen how I go about it, and what artful compliancy I have had to show in order to introduce myself into his service; what a mask of sympathy and of fellow-feeling I have put on to please him, and what a rôle I play, daily and hourly, in order to gain his good-will. I am making excellent progress to that end; and I find that to win men over, there 's no better way than to deck yourself out before their eyes in their own humours, chime in with their maxims, flatter their follies, and applaud all they do. You need n't fear to overdo it; no matter how evident your method of tricking them may be, the slyest of men are always amazing dupes when it comes to flattery; and there is nothing so silly or so ridiculous but what you can make them swallow it, when it is well spiced with praise. Sincerity suffers somewhat in this business; but when we need men, we have to adapt ourselves to them;

and since we cannot win them any other way, 't is the fault not of those who flatter, but of those who want to be flattered.

ELISE

But why do you not try to gain my brother's support also, in case the serving-maid should chance to betray our secret?

VALERE

There 's no humouring them both at once; the father's temper and the son's are so opposite that one could hardly be the confidant of both at the same time. But you must try yourself to manage your brother, and take advantage of the affection between you, to win him over to our interests. Here he comes. I will leave you together. Seize this chance to speak with him, but reveal no more of our affairs than you think necessary.

ELISE

I don't know whether I shall have the courage to confide in him.

SCENE II

CLEANTE, ELISE

CLEANTE

I am very glad to find you alone, sister; I was longing to speak with you, and to unbosom myself of a secret.

ELISE

I am ready to listen, brother. What have you to tell me?

CLEANTE

A world of things, sister, all contained in one word. I am in love.

ELISE

You are in love?

CLEANTE

Yes, in love. But before I go on, let me say that I realise my dependence on my father, and the duty of submitting to his will; I know that we ought not to pledge our love without the consent of those to whom we owe our life; that Heaven has made them the masters of our affections, which we are bound not to bestow save under their guidance; that they, being unprejudiced by any mad passion, are much less likely to be mistaken, and can see much better than we what is best for us; that we must rather follow the light of their prudence than the blindness of our impulses; and that the impetuosity of youth often draws us into grievous dangers. I say all this to you, sister, to spare you the trouble of saying it to me; for the fact is, my love will listen to nothing, so I beg you not to remonstrate with me.

ELISE

Have you made any engagement, brother, with the one you love?

CLEANTE

No; but I am resolved to do so, and I beg you once more not to bring forward any arguments to dissuade me from it.

ELISE

Am I then so strange a character, brother?

CLEANTE

No, sister; but you are not in love. You are ignorant of the sweet compulsion which a gentle passion exerts upon our hearts; and I dread your prudence.

ELISE

Alas! brother, not a word of my prudence; there is no one but what is lacking in it at least once in his life, and if I open my heart to you, perhaps I shall seem in your eyes much less sensible than you are.

CLEANTE

Ah! would to Heaven your heart, like mine . . .!

ELISE

Let us finish your story first; tell me who it is you love.

CLEANTE

A young girl who has lately come to live in this neighbourhood, and who seems made to inspire love in all who see her. Nature has formed nothing more charming, and I was carried away the moment I set eyes on her. Her name is Mariane, and she lives under the care of a dear old mother, who is almost constantly ill, and toward whom this lovely girl shows an affection past imagining. She waits upon her, consoles her, and cheers her, with a tenderness that would touch you to the heart. She has the most charming way about everything she does; a thousand graces shine forth in all her acts, a winning sweetness, an all-engaging goodness, an admirable modesty, a . . . . Ah! sister, I would that you had seen her.

ELISE

I see much of her, dear brother, in what you tell me; and to understand what she is, it is enough to know that you love her.

CLEANTE

I have discovered secretly that they are not very well-to-do, and even with their careful management they have difficulty in making the small means they possess meet all their needs. Imagine, dear sister, what a joy it must be to better the lot of one you love; to give delicately some slight relief to the modest necessities of a virtuous family; and then imagine the pain it gives me to see myself, through a father's avarice, unable to enjoy this happiness or to show my dear one any proof of my affection.

ELISE

Yes, I can well conceive how great a sorrow this must be to you.

CLEANTE

Ah! sister, it is greater than can be imagined. For, after all, can there be anything more cruel than this rigid parsimony that is exercised over us, this amazing penury in which we are made to pine? What good will it do us to have property, if it does not come to us until we are no longer in our prime to enjoy it, and if I must now, even for my necessary support, run into debt in every direction; if I am reduced, as you are, to seeking help daily from tradesmen in order to be dressed with any decency? In short, I wanted to speak with you and get your help in sounding my father about my present senti-

ments; and if I should find him opposed to them, I am determined to go elsewhere, with this charming creature, and make the best of whatever fortune Heaven shall please to send us. With this purpose, I am hunting high and low for money to borrow; and if your situation resembles mine, and if our father must needs oppose our wishes, we will both abandon him, and free ourselves from the tyranny under which his insupportable avarice has so long held us.

ELISE

'T is true he daily gives us more and more reason to mourn the death of our mother, and . . . .

CLEANTE

I hear his voice; let us go away for a while to finish our mutual confidences; and then we will join forces to come and attack his hardened heart.

SCENE III

HARPAGON, LA FLECHE

HARPAGON

Get out of here this moment, and don't answer me back. Come, take yourself off, I say, you past master thief, you true gallows-game.

LA FLECHE, *aside*

I never saw anything so villainous as this cursed old man; and I think, or I 'm much mistaken, that he has the very devil in him.

HARPAGON

You are muttering between your teeth?

LA FLECHE

Why do you dismiss me?

HARPAGON

The idea, you hangdog, of your asking me for reasons! Get you gone quickly, before I beat your brains out.

LA FLECHE

What have I done to you?

HARPAGON

Made me determined you shall be gone.

LA FLECHE

But my master your son ordered me to wait for him here.

HARPAGON

Go and wait for him in the street, and don't let yourself be seen in my house, planted bolt upright like a stake, and watching all that goes on, to serve your own ends. I won't have eternally before me a spy upon my affairs, a traitor whose cursed eyes besiege my every act, devour all I possess, and ferret about in every corner to see whether there is anything to steal.

LA FLECHE

How the deuce would you have anyone go about to steal from you? Are you a man to be robbed, when you lock up everything, and stand sentinel day and night?

HARPAGON

I will lock up all I please, and stand sentinel as

much as I please. A nice lot of sly spies these are, watching everything I do! (*Aside*) I tremble lest he may have some suspicion about my money. (*Aloud*) Are n't you just the sort of man to spread the report that I have money hid in my house?

LA FLECHE

You have money hid?

HARPAGON

No, rascal, I don't say that. (*Aside*) I shall go mad. (*Aloud*) I mean, are n't you just spiteful enough to spread the report that I have.

LA FLECHE

Eh? What 's the odds to us, whether you have or have n't, if one serves us no more than t' other?

HARPAGON

Ah, you turn reasoner! I 'll give you reason enough in at your ears. (*He raises his hand to cuff him.*) Begone from here, I tell you again.

LA FLECHE

Well! I 'm gone then.

HARPAGON

Stop! Are n't you carrying off anything of mine?

LA FLECHE

What should I carry off?

HARPAGON

Come here, till I see. Show me your hands.

LA FLECHE

There they are.

HARPAGON

Now the others.

LA FLECHE

The others?

HARPAGON

Yes.

LA FLECHE

Well, there.

HARPAGON, *pointing to La Flèche's breeches*

Have you anything hidden here?

LA FLECHE

See for yourself.

HARPAGON, *feeling the knees of La Flèche's breeches*

These great breeches are just made to be receivers of stolen goods; and I wish some of them might be hung, for an example.

LA FLECHE

Ah! how richly does such a man deserve what he fears! and what joy it would give me to rob him.

HARPAGON

Eh?

LA FLECHE

What?

HARPAGON

What do you say about robbing?

LA FLECHE

I say you must feel about everywhere to see if I 've robbed you.

HARPAGON

That is what I mean to do. (*He searches La Flèche's pockets.*)

LA FLECHE

Plague take stinginess and stingy curs!

HARPAGON

How? What do you say?

LA FLECHE

What do I say?

HARPAGON

Yes. What is it you say about stinginess and stingy curs?

LA FLECHE

I say plague take stinginess and stingy curs.

HARPAGON

Whom do you mean?

LA FLECHE

The stingy.

HARPAGON

But who are the stingy?

LA FLECHE

Curs and curmudgeons.

HARPAGON

But who is it you mean by that?

LA FLECHE

What is that to you?

HARPAGON

It is—my own business.

LA FLECHE

Do you think I mean you?

HARPAGON

I think what I think; but I mean you shall tell me whom you are talking to when you say that.

LA FLECHE

I am talking . . . I am talking to my hat.

HARPAGON

And I may, like as not, make my stick talk to your head.

LA FLECHE

Will you keep me from cursing the stingy?

HARPAGON

No; but I 'll keep you from prating and insulting me. Hold your tongue.

LA FLECHE

I name no names.

HARPAGON

Another word, and I 'll thrash you.

LA FLECHE

If the cap fits anybody, let him put it on.

HARPAGON

Will you be still?

LA FLECHE

Yes, against my will.

HARPAGON

Ha! Ha!

LA FLECHE, *showing Harpagon one of the pockets in his doublet*

Here, here's one pocket more. Now are you satisfied?

HARPAGON

Come, give it back without my searching you.

LA FLECHE

What?

HARPAGON

What you took from me.

LA FLECHE

I took nothing at all from you.

HARPAGON

Truly?

LA FLECHE

Truly.

HARPAGON

Good-bye, then. And the devil go with you.

LA FLECHE

So, I 'm dismissed with a blessing.

HARPAGON

I charge it upon your conscience, anyhow. There 's a rascal of a valet who is a constant nuisance to me; I hate the sight of the limping cur.

SCENE IV

HARPAGON, *alone*

Surely 't is no small plague to keep a great sum of cash in one's house. Happy the man who has all his money at good interest, and keeps about him only what he needs for his expenses! One must be at great pains to find, in the whole house, a faithful hiding-place; for to me all safes are under suspicion, and I will never trust them. I hold they are just a bait for robbers; and 't is ever the first thing they 'll attack.

SCENE V

HARPAGON; ELISE *and* CLEANTE, *whispering together at the back of the stage*

HARPAGON, *thinking himself alone*

Yet, I don't know whether I did well to bury in the garden those ten thousand crowns that were paid in yesterday. Ten thousand crowns in gold is a sum to have by you . . . . (*At this point the brother and sister appear, whispering together.*) Oh, Heavens! I must have betrayed myself! My excitement carried me away, and I think I spoke out loud, in talking to myself. (*To Cléante and Elise*) What is it?

CLEANTE

Nothing, father.

HARPAGON

Have you been there long?

ELISE

We have just come.

HARPAGON

You heard . . . .

CLEANTE

What, father?

HARPAGON

What I . . . .

ELISE

What?

HARPAGON

What I said just now?

CLEANTE

No.

HARPAGON

Yes, you did.

ELISE

But, pardon me . . . .

HARPAGON

I see very well that you heard a few words of it. You see I was talking to myself about the trouble one has nowadays to get hold of ready money, and was saying that a man is mighty lucky who can have ten thousand crowns in his house.

CLEANTE

We hesitated about approaching you, for fear of interrupting you.

HARPAGON

I am very glad to tell you this, so that you may not go and misunderstand things, or imagine that I say it is I who have ten thousand crowns.

CLEANTE

We do not pry into your affairs.

HARPAGON

Would to God I had those ten thousand crowns.

CLEANTE

I don't believe . . . .

HARPAGON

It would be a fine thing for me.

ELISE

These are matters . . . .

HARPAGON

I am in great need of them.

CLEANTE

I think . . . .

HARPAGON

It would just arrange things.

ELISE

You are . . . .

HARPAGON

And I should not be complaining as I do now, of the wretched hard times.

CLEANTE

Heavens! father, you have no reason to complain; everyone knows you have plenty of property.

HARPAGON

What, I have plenty of property! Those who say so are liars. There is nothing more false; and they are scoundrels to spread such reports.

ELISE

Don't get in a passion.

HARPAGON

It is strange that my own children should betray me, and become my enemies!

CLEANTE

Is it being your enemy to say that you have property?

HARPAGON

Yes. Such talk, and your extravagance, will result some day in their coming to cut my throat in my own house, thinking I 'm made of money.

CLEANTE

What extravagance do I indulge in?

HARPAGON

What extravagance? Can anything be more scandalous than this sumptuous get-up you go jaunting about town in? I was scolding your sister yesterday, but you are worse yet; it cries to Heaven; and taking you from head to foot, there is enough on you to buy a good annuity. I have told you

twenty times, my son, all your ways displease me greatly; you furiously affect to play the marquis; and to go dressed as you do, you must certainly be robbing me.

CLEANTE

Eh! How could I rob you?

HARPAGON

How do I know? If not, where can you get the wherewithal to keep up the style you put on?

CLEANTE

I, father? 'T is by play; and since I am very lucky, I put all I win on my back.

HARPAGON

The more shame for you. If you are lucky at play, you ought to profit by it, and put out the money you win at honest interest, in order to find it again some day. Not to speak of the other things, I should very much like to know what is the use of all those ribbons that you 're so finely tricked out with from top to toe; and whether half a dozen tie-points are n't enough to hold up your breeches. There 's great need of wasting money on wigs when one can wear hair of one's own growth, that costs nothing! I 'll wager that what with wigs and what with ribbons there 's at least twenty pistoles spent; and twenty pistoles bring in eighteen francs, six sous and eight deniers, per year, at only eight per cent. interest.

CLEANTE

You are quite right.

HARPAGON

Enough of that, let us speak of another matter. (*He sees Cléante and Elise making signs to each other.*) Eh! (*Aside*) I think they are making signs to each other to steal my purse. (*Aloud*) What do those gestures mean?

ELISE

My brother and I are arguing to see which shall speak first; we have both of us something to tell you.

HARPAGON

And I likewise have something to tell you both.

CLEANTE

'T is about marriage, father, that we want to speak with you.

HARPAGON

And marriage is the subject I want to speak with you about.

ELISE

Ah! father!

HARPAGON

Why that "Ah"? Is it the word, girl, or the thing, that affrights you?

CLEANTE

Marriage may frighten us both, in the way you may mean it; and we fear that perhaps our feelings will not agree with your choice.

HARPAGON

Patience, patience; don't be alarmed. I know

what is proper for both of you, and neither shall have any cause to complain of what I intend to do. And, to take one at a time, (*to Cléante*) tell me, have you seen a young girl named Mariane, who lives not far from here?

CLEANTE

Yes, father.

HARPAGON

And you?

ELISE

I have heard her spoken of.

HARPAGON

What do you think of this girl, my son?

CLEANTE

She is altogether charming.

HARPAGON

Her face?

CLEANTE

Ingenuous and full of intelligence.

HARPAGON

Her air and manner?

CLEANTE

Admirable, without question.

HARPAGON

Do you not think such a girl is worth considering?

CLEANTE

Yes, father.

HARPAGON

That she would be a desirable match?

CLEANTE

Most desirable.

HARPAGON

That she looks quite as though she would make a good manager?

CLEANTE

Beyond doubt.

HARPAGON

And that a husband would find satisfaction with her?

CLEANTE

Certainly.

HARPAGON

There is one little difficulty; I am afraid she does n't bring with her as much property as we 'd have a right to expect.

CLEANTE

Ah, father, property is not to be taken into consideration, when one thinks of marrying a good girl.

HARPAGON

Pardon me, pardon me. But there is this much to be said, that if she has n't as much dowry as one could wish, we can try to make it up otherwise.

CLEANTE

Of course.

HARPAGON

Very well, I am glad to find you agree with me; for her modest behaviour and her gentleness have won my heart, and I am resolved to marry her, provided I get some dowry with her.

CLEANTE

Eh?

HARPAGON

What?

CLEANTE

You are resolved, you say . . . .

HARPAGON

To marry Mariane.

CLEANTE

Who, you? you?

HARPAGON

Yes, I, I, I. What do you mean?

CLEANTE

I have been seized with a sudden dizziness, and must leave you a moment.

HARPAGON

'T will be nothing. Go quick to the kitchen and drink a good big glass of plain water.

SCENE VI

HARPAGON, ELISE

HARPAGON

That is just like your effeminate young beaux,

who have no more vigour than a chicken. Well, daughter, that is what I 've settled on for myself. As for your brother, I intend for him a certain widow whom I have heard of this morning; and for you, I shall marry you to Signior Anselme.

ELISE

To Signior Anselme ?

HARPAGON

Yes, a mature, prudent, settled man, not above fifty years old, and reputed very wealthy.

ELISE, *curtseying*

I don't care to marry, father dear, if you please.

HARPAGON, *mimicking her curtsey*

And I, my little daughter, my precious, I 'll have you married, if you please.

ELISE, *curtseying again*

I beg your pardon, father.

HARPAGON, *mimicking Elise*

I beg yours, daughter.

ELISE

I am Signior Anselme's most humble servant; but, (*curtseying again*) by your leave, I shall not marry him.

HARPAGON

I am your most humble slave; but, (*mimicking Elise*) by your leave, you shall marry him this very evening.

ELISE

This very evening?

HARPAGON

This very evening.

ELISE, *curtseying again*

That will not come to pass, father.

HARPAGON, *mimicking Elise again*

That will come to pass, daughter.

ELISE

No.

HARPAGON

Yes.

ELISE

No, I tell you.

HARPAGON

Yes, I tell you.

ELISE

'T is a thing you 'll never bring me to.

HARPAGON

'T is a thing I will bring you to.

ELISE

I 'll sooner kill myself than marry such a husband.

HARPAGON

You 'll not kill yourself, and you 'll marry him. Why, look at the impudence! Was ever a daughter known to speak to her father in such fashion?

ELISE

But was ever a father known to marry his daughter in such fashion?

HARPAGON

'T is a match no fault can be found with; and I wager everyone will approve my choice.

ELISE

And I wager it can be approved by no reasonable person.

HARPAGON, *seeing Valère in the distance*

There is Valère. Shall we make him judge between us in the matter?

ELISE

I agree.

HARPAGON

Will you yield to his decision?

ELISE

Yes; I will abide by what he says.

HARPAGON

That 's a bargain.

SCENE VII

VALERE, HARPAGON, ELISE

HARPAGON

Here, Valère. We have chosen you to tell us which is right, my daughter or I.

VALERE

You are, sir, beyond question.

HARPAGON

Do you happen to know what we are talking about?

VALERE

No. But you cannot be in the wrong, you are reason itself.

HARPAGON

I mean to marry her this evening to a man as rich as he is good; and the quean tells me to my face that she will have none of him. What do you say to that?

VALERE

What do I say to it?

HARPAGON

Yes.

VALERE

Well, er—

HARPAGON

What?

VALERE

I say that on the whole I agree with you; and you cannot possibly help being right. But then again, she is not absolutely wrong, and . . .

HARPAGON

What? Signior Anselme is a match not to be despised; he is a gentleman of genuine nobility, kind, staid, prudent, and in very good circumstances, and he has no children left from his first marriage. Could she find anything better?

VALERE

That is true; but she might tell you that you are

rather hurrying matters, and that you should at least take some little time to find out whether her inclinations can be suited, with . . .

HARPAGON

No, 't is a chance we must catch by the forelock. I find in it an advantage which I should not find elsewhere; he agrees to take her without a dowry.

VALERE

Without a dowry?

HARPAGON

Yes.

VALERE

Oh! I say no more. Do you see, that is an absolutely convincing argument; you must yield to that.

HARPAGON

It is a considerable saving to me.

VALERE

Assuredly; there is no gainsaying it. To be sure, your daughter might allege that marriage is a more important matter than people often think; that it involves the happiness or unhappiness of one's whole life; and that a bond which is to hold until death ought not to be assumed without grave consideration.

HARPAGON

Without a dowry!

VALERE

You are right; that decides everything; of course.

There are people who might tell you that in such matters a daughter's feelings are no doubt a thing to be considered; and that such great disparity in age, humour, and sentiments may cause very unpleasant accidents in married life.

HARPAGON

Without a dowry!

VALERE

Oh! there 's no replying to that; everyone admits it. Who can stand against it? Not but what there are many fathers who would rather have regard to their daughters' happiness than to the money they might have to give up; who would never sacrifice their children to their own selfish interests, and would seek in marriage, above everything else, that happy conformity of tastes which assures its honour, tranquillity, and joy; and . . .

HARPAGON

Without a dowry!

VALERE

True, true; there 's nothing more can be said after that. Without a dowry! How can anyone withstand such an argument?

HARPAGON, *aside, looking toward the garden*

Bless me! I think I hear a dog barking. Is n't there someone after my money? (*To Valère*) Do not stir; I 'll be back at once.

SCENE VIII

ELISE, VALERE

ELISE

What do you mean, Valère, by speaking as you do?

VALERE

'T is in order not to exasperate him, and to get round him better in the end. Going directly counter to his opinions is the sure way to spoil everything. There are some people whom you can manage only by indirection; tempers that will stand no opposition, stubborn natures that rear up at the truth, that always balk at the straight road of reason, and can be led where you would bring them only by roundabout ways. Pretend to consent to what he wants, and you 'll gain your point better; and . . .

ELISE

But this marriage, Valère!

VALERE

We will find some shift to break it off.

ELISE

But what can be found, if it is to be concluded this evening?

VALERE

You must ask for delay, and feign an illness.

ELISE

But the pretence will be discovered, if they call in the doctors.

VALERE

What an idea! As if they knew anything about it! No, no, so far as they are concerned, you can have whatever disease you prefer; and they will find out reasons for it, and tell you its cause.

SCENE IX

HARPAGON, ELISE, VALERE

HARPAGON, *aside, at the back of the stage*

'T is nothing, thank God.

VALERE, *not seeing Harpagon*

And finally, our last resort is to take refuge in flight; and if your love, fair Elise, is capable of sufficient firmness . . . (*Seeing Harpagon*) Yes, a daughter must obey her father. She must not consider what a husband looks like; and when the substantial argument of *without a dowry* is met with, she must be ready to take anything that is offered her.

HARPAGON

Good. That 's well said, that is!

VALERE

Sir, I ask your pardon if I am somewhat overzealous and take the liberty to address her as I do.

HARPAGON

Why! I am delighted at it, and I shall give you absolute power over her. (*To Elise*) Yes, it is no use your running away; I transfer to him the au-

thority over you that Heaven has given me, and I will have you do exactly as he says.

VALERE, *to Elise*

After that, resist my remonstrances!

SCENE X

HARPAGON, VALERE

VALERE

Sir, I will follow her, to continue the lessons I was giving her.

HARPAGON

Do; you will oblige me. Surely . . .

VALERE

'T is well to keep a tight rein on her.

HARPAGON

That is true. We must . . .

VALERE

Give yourself no concern. I think I shall manage.

HARPAGON

Do, do. I 'll go take a little turn in the city, and be back presently.

VALERE, *speaking to Elise as he goes out after her*

Yes, money is more precious than anything else in the world; and you ought to thank Heaven for the worthy father it has given you. He knows what is right and proper. When a man offers to take off a girl without a dowry one must look no farther.

Everything is included in that; and *without a dowry* takes the place of beauty, youth, birth, honour, wisdom, and uprightness.

HARPAGON

Oh! worthy youth! that is spoken like an oracle. Lucky the man who can have such a servant.

ACT II

SCENE I

CLEANTE, LA FLECHE

CLEANTE

How now, you rascal! Where have you been hiding? Did n't I order you . . .

LA FLECHE

Yes, sir; and I came here to wait for you without budging; but your father, the surliest of men, drove me out willy-nilly, and I ran the risk of a good thrashing.

CLEANTE

How are our affairs going? The case is more urgent than ever; since I saw you I have discovered that my father is my rival.

LA FLECHE

Your father, in love?

CLEANTE

Yes; and I had the greatest difficulty in hiding from him the confusion which this news threw me into.

LA FLECHE

He, dabbling in love! What the devil is he

dreaming of? Does he think the world a fool? and is love meant for folks of his make?

CLEANTE

It was fated, for the punishment of my sins, that he should be seized with this passion.

LA FLECHE

But why do you keep your love a secret from him?

CLEANTE

To give him the less cause for suspicion, and to leave myself, in case of need, some opening the more easily to prevent his marriage. But what answer did you get?

LA FLECHE

On my word, sir, those who borrow are mighty unhappy. One must put up with strange things when one is under the necessity, as you are, of passing through the hands of the usurers.

CLEANTE

Can't the thing be arranged?

LA FLECHE

Just wait a minute. Our Master Simon, the broker they sent us to, a stirring and zealous man, says he has done his utmost for you; and he protests that your looks alone have won his heart.

CLEANTE

Then I shall get the fifteen thousand francs I want?

LA FLECHE

Yes, but on some few slight conditions which you

must accept if you mean to have the thing put through.

CLEANTE

Did he have you meet the man who is to lend the money?

LA FLECHE

Oh! no indeed, the business is n't done that way. He takes even more pains to hide himself than you do, and these things are far greater mysteries than you think. They would not tell me his name, for anything; and to-day he is to be brought to meet you in a house borrowed for the occasion, that he may learn from your own lips about your property and your family; but I have no doubt that your father's name alone will be enough to make things go smoothly.

CLEANTE

And especially since our mother is dead, and her property cannot be alienated from me.

LA FLECHE

Here are a few articles which he dictated himself to our go-between, to be shown to you before deciding anything:

"Provided, the lender find himself well secured, and the borrower be of age, and of a family whose property is ample, solid, secure, clear and free of all encumbrance, a good and exact bond shall be made, before a notary, the most honest one to be found, who to this end shall be chosen by the lender, who has the greater interest in seeing that the instrument be properly executed."

CLEANTE

There's no fault to find with that.

LA FLECHE

"The lender, in order not to burden his conscience with any scruple, will let out his money at only five and a half per cent."

CLEANTE

At five and a half per cent.? Zounds! That is honest. There's no reason to complain.

LA FLECHE

True.

"But, since the said lender has not by him the full sum in question, and since, in order to do the borrower a favour, he is compelled himself to borrow it from another at the rate of twenty per cent., it will be only right that the said first borrower pay this interest, without deduction from the other, seeing it is only to oblige him that the said lender is making the said loan."

CLEANTE

Oh the devil! what a Jew, what an Arab have we here? 'T is more than twenty-five per cent.

LA FLECHE

True; that is what I said. 'T is for you to consider.

CLEANTE

What would you have me consider? I need money, and must consent to everything.

LA FLECHE

That is just the answer I made.

CLEANTE

Is there anything else?

LA FLECHE

Only one little article:

"Of the fifteen thousand francs asked for, the lender can pay in cash only twelve thousand; and for the remaining thousand crowns, the borrower must take the goods, chattels, and valuables, mentioned in the following memorandum, which the said lender has in good faith set at the most modest price possible."

CLEANTE

What does all that mean?

LA FLECHE

Listen to the memorandum:

"Firstly, one four-foot bed, with hangings of Hungary point, handsomely appliquéed upon an olive-coloured cloth, with six chairs and the counterpane to match; the whole in good condition, and lined with a thin red and blue shot taffetas.

"Item, one canopy, with long curtains of good Aumale serge, old rose colour, with valance and fringes of silk."

CLEANTE

What would he have me do with that?

LA FLECHE

Wait.

"Item, one set of tapestries representing the loves of Gombaud and Macea.

"Item, one large walnut table, with twelve columns or turned legs, which pulls out at both ends, and is provided beneath with its six stools."

CLEANTE

Zounds, what use have I . . .

LA FLECHE

Have patience.

"Item, three large muskets inlaid with mother-of-pearl, with their rests to match.

"Item, one tiled furnace with two retorts and three receivers, very useful for such as are curious to practice alchemy."

CLEANTE

I shall go mad.

LA FLECHE

Softly.

"Item, one Bologna lute, with all its strings, or nearly all.

"Item, one pigeon-hole table, and one chess-board, with the game of fox and geese, recovered from the Greeks, most fit to pass the time when you have nothing to do.

"Item, one lizard skin of three foot and a half, stuffed with hay; a pleasing curiosity to hang up at the ceiling of a room.

"The total above-mentioned, being honestly worth four thousand five hundred francs, and reduced by the moderation of the lender to one thousand crowns."

CLEANTE

The plague choke him with his moderation, traitor and butcher that he is! Was ever such usury heard of? Is he not satisfied with the outrageous interest he demands, but he must also make me take for three thousand francs all the old rubbish he picks up? I sha'n't get two hundred crowns out of the lot; and yet I must make up my mind to come to his terms, for he is in a position to make me accept anything; and he has me, the villain, with a knife at my throat.

LA FLECHE

Sir, no offence to you, I find you exactly on the high road that Panurge took to ruin, getting money in advance, buying dear, selling cheap, and eating his corn in the blade.[1]

CLEANTE

What would you have me do? That is what young men are reduced to by the cursed avarice of fathers; and yet people wonder that their sons wish them dead!

LA FLECHE

It must be owned that your father would rouse the calmest man in the world by his meanness. Thank God, I have not a strong taste for the gallows; and, among my comrades whom I see playing the picker-up of unconsidered trifles, I am clever enough to keep out of scrapes, and to disentangle myself from all the fine tricks that smack ever so little of the rope; but to tell the truth, his behaviour almost

[1] *French Classics for English Readers*, Vol. I, *Rabelais*, p. 214.

tempts me to rob him; and in doing so, I should think I was accomplishing a meritorious act.

CLEANTE

Just give me that memorandum, and let me have another look at it.

SCENE II

HARPAGON, MASTER SIMON; CLEANTE *and* LA FLECHE, *at the back of the stage*

MASTER SIMON

Yes, sir; 't is a young man in great want of money; his affairs make his need of it urgent, and he will submit to everything you prescribe.

HARPAGON

But do you think, Master Simon, that there is no risk to be run; and do you know the name, family, and estate of the young man you are speaking for?

MASTER SIMON

No. I cannot inform you exactly about that; 't is only by chance that I was directed to him; but he will inform you himself on every point, and his man assured me that you will be satisfied when you come to know him. All I can tell you is, that his family is very rich, that he has already lost his mother, and will bind himself, if you wish, to have his father die within eight months.

HARPAGON

That is something. Charity, Master Simon, makes it our duty to oblige people when we can.

MASTER SIMON

Of course.

LA FLECHE, *aside to Cléante, recognising Master Simon*

What does this mean? Our Master Simon speaking with your father!

CLEANTE, *aside to La Flèche*

Can anyone have told him who I am? Are you a man to betray me?

MASTER SIMON, *to Cléante and La Flèche*

Ah! Ah! you are in a great hurry! Who told you it was here? (*To Harpagon*) At least 't is not I, sir, who revealed your name and your house to them; but I think there is no great harm in it. They are men of discretion; and you can come to an understanding here.

HARPAGON

What?

MASTER SIMON, *pointing to Cléante*

This is the gentleman who wants to borrow the fifteen thousand francs I spoke to you about.

HARPAGON

What, miscreant! is 't you that abandon yourself to these wicked excesses?

CLEANTE

What, father! 't is you that descend to these shameful actions? (*Master Simon runs away, and La Flèche hides.*)

SCENE III

HARPAGON, CLEANTE

HARPAGON

'T is you that mean to ruin me by such criminal borrowings?

CLEANTE

'T is you that seek to enrich yourself by such villainous usury?

HARPAGON

After this, do you dare to appear before me?

CLEANTE

After this, do you dare to show your face to the world?

HARPAGON

Tell me, are you not ashamed to descend to such debauchery? To run headlong into such awful expenses? and scandalously to squander the property your family have amassed for you by the sweat of their brows?

CLEANTE

Do you not blush to disgrace your station by the trade you drive? To sacrifice honour and reputation to the insatiable desire of heaping crown upon crown, and to outdo in the matter of interest the most infamous subtleties ever invented by the most notorious usurers?

HARPAGON

Begone from my sight, you scoundrel; begone from my sight!

CLEANTE

Which is the more culpable, do you think, he who hires money he needs, or he who steals money he has no use for?

HARPAGON

Begone, I say, and do not talk me into a rage. (*Alone*) I am not at all sorry for this adventure; 't is a warning to me to keep a stricter eye than ever upon his actions.

SCENE IV

FROSINE, HARPAGON

FROSINE

Sir . . .

HARPAGON

Wait a moment. I 'll be back and talk with you. (*Aside*) 'T is time I should go and pay a little visit to my money.

SCENE V

LA FLECHE, FROSINE

LA FLECHE, *not seeing Frosine*

The adventure is comical to the last degree! He must have a great store of goods somewhere; for we did not recognise anything in the memorandum he gave us.

FROSINE

Ah! 't is you, my poor La Flèche! How comes this meeting?

LA FLECHE

Aha! 't is you, Frosine! What are you doing here?

FROSINE

What I do everywhere else; playing the go-between, making myself of use in the world, and profiting as best I may by what slight talents Heaven has given me. You know we must live by our wits in this world, and people like me have no other source of income but intrigue and trickery.

LA FLECHE

Have you any dealings with the master of this house?

FROSINE

Yes. I have a little transaction in hand for him, which I hope will bring me in something.

LA FLECHE

From him? On my word, you 'll be mighty clever if you get anything out of him; and I warn you money is mighty hard to come by in this house.

FROSINE

There are certain services which are wonderfully winning.

LA FLECHE

I 'm your humble servant; but you don't know our Signior Harpagon yet. Signior Harpagon is of all humans the least human human; the mortal of all mortals that is hardest and closest. No service can push his gratitude so far as to make him open his fists. Praise, esteem, pleasant words, and friendship,

as much as you please; but money, not on your life. There is nothing drier or more arid than his graces and caresses; and *give* is a word he has such an aversion for, that he never says *I give you good-day*, but, *I lend you good-day*.

FROSINE

Bless you, I know the art of milking men; I have the secret of entering into their affections, of tickling their hearts, and finding their tender spots.

LA FLECHE

All idle tricks here. I defy you to soften the man we are talking of, in the matter of money. In that he 's a Turk—and of such a Turkishness that he 'll drive the whole world to despair, and you might drop dead before ever he 'd budge. In a word, he loves money more than reputation, honour, and virtue; and the sight of anyone with demands on his purse throws him into convulsions; this wounds him in his mortal spot, this pierces his heart, this tears out his vitals; and if . . . But he is coming back; I 'll begone.

SCENE VI

HARPAGON, FROSINE

HARPAGON, *aside*

It 's all right. (*Aloud*) Well! what is it, Frosine?

FROSINE

Oh! bless me, how well you are looking; what a picture of health!

HARPAGON

Who? I!

FROSINE

I 've never seen your colour so fresh and hearty.

HARPAGON

Really?

FROSINE

Why! you never were so young in your life as you are now; I see many fellows of five and twenty that are older than you.

HARPAGON

For all that, Frosine, I am fully sixty.

FROSINE

Eh! What 's that, a matter of sixty years! The idea! 'T is the flower of one's age; you are just entering the prime of manhood.

HARPAGON

That 's true; but twenty years less, all the same, would n't be amiss, methinks.

FROSINE

Nonsense! You don't need that, you are made of the stuff to live to a hundred.

HARPAGON

You think so?

FROSINE

Certainly. You have all the marks of it. Just let 's see! Oh! you certainly have there, between your two eyes, a sign of long life.

HARPAGON

You are skilled in these matters?

FROSINE

Of course. Show me your hand. Oh Lud! what a line o' life!

HARPAGON

What!

FROSINE

Don't you see how far that line goes?

HARPAGON

Well! what does that mean?

FROSINE

On my word, I said a hundred years, but you 'll weather six-score.

HARPAGON

Is it possible?

FROSINE

You 'll have to be knocked on the head, I tell you; and you will bury your children, and your children's children.

HARPAGON

So much the better. How goes our business?

FROSINE

Need you ask? Am I ever found to meddle with anything I do not bring to pass? Especially in the matter of marriages, I have a marvellous talent. There 's no two people in the world I cannot find means of matching, and that in a trice; and I think,

if I took it into my head, I could marry the Grand Turk to the Republic of Venice. But this affair, to be sure, offered no such great difficulties. Being intimate with these ladies, I told them all about you, and I told the mother of the plan you had formed for Mariane, since you saw her passing by in the street and taking the air at her window.

HARPAGON

And she answered . . . ?

FROSINE

She received the proposal with joy; and when I told her of your great desire to have her daughter present at the signing of your daughter's marriage contract this evening, she consented readily and entrusted her to my care.

HARPAGON

You see, Frosine, I am obliged to give a supper to Signior Anselme; and I shall be very glad to have her share the treat.

FROSINE

Quite right. After dinner she is to pay a visit to your daughter, then she intends to go from here to the fair, and then come back for supper.

HARPAGON

Well! they shall go together in my coach, which I 'll lend them.

FROSINE

That will suit her exactly.

HARPAGON

But, Frosine, have you talked with the mother in regard to what dowry she can give to her daughter? Did you tell her that she must bestir herself, that she must make a special effort, that she must bleed herself, for such an occasion as this? For of course one cannot marry a girl unless she brings something with her.

FROSINE

Why! She is a girl who will bring you twelve thousand francs a year.

HARPAGON

Twelve thousand francs a year?

FROSINE

Yes. In the first place, she has been brought up on very short rations. She is accustomed to living on salads, milk, cheese, and apples; so she will need neither a well-served table, nor your delicate broths, nor your everlasting peeled-barley milk, nor any of the other tid-bits that most women must have; and that does n't come to so little but what 't will amount, every year, to three thousand francs at least. Besides, she cares only for simple neatness, and does not love your magnificent gowns, nor your rich jewels, nor your sumptuous furniture, which such as she run after with so much eagerness; and that item comes to four thousand francs a year. Moreover, she has a horrible aversion to play, which is not common in women nowadays; and I know of one in our neighbourhood who has lost twenty thousand francs this year at trente-et-quarante. But

call it only a quarter of that. Five thousand francs a year at play, and four thousand francs in gowns and jewels, make nine thousand francs; and with a thousand crowns that we reckon for food, does n't that make your twelve thousand francs per year in good money?

HARPAGON

Yes, that is not so bad; but this computation has nothing real in it.

FROSINE

Pardon me. Is it not something real to bring you for marriage portion a perfect sobriety, inherited rights to a great love of simplicity in dress, and the acquired estate of a rich stock-in-trade of hatred for play?

HARPAGON

'T is a mockery to try to make up her dowry of all the expenses she will not put me to. I sha'n't give a receipt for what I don't get, and I surely must have something tangible.

FROSINE

Bless me! you 'll have enough; they told me of a certain country where they have property which you shall be master of.

HARPAGON

That must be looked into. But, Frosine, there 's one thing more that gives me pause. The girl is young, you see; and young folk, for the most part, love only their like, and seek only such company; I fear a man of my age may not be to her taste; and

that may occasion in my household some trifling complications which would not at all suit me.

FROSINE

Ah! how little you know her! That is another peculiarity which I meant to tell you of! She has a frightful aversion for all young fellows, and loves none but old men.

HARPAGON

Does she so?

FROSINE

Yes, she does. I wish you might have heard her talk on that head. She can't bear the sight of a young man at all, but she is never more delighted, she says, than when she can behold a handsome old man with a majestic beard. The older they are, the more charming to her; and I warn you not to go and get yourself up younger than you are. She would have a man be at least in the sixties; and not four months ago, being on the point of marriage, she flatly broke off the match, because her lover admitted that he was only fifty-six, and did not put on spectacles to sign the marriage contract.

HARPAGON

Just for that?

FROSINE

Yes. She says there is no satisfaction for her in fifty-six years; and she has a special weakness for noses that wear spectacles.

HARPAGON

Truly this is something quite new to me.

FROSINE

It goes beyond all I can tell you. She has in her chamber some pictures and engravings, but what do you think they are? Your Adonises, your Cephaluses, your Parises, and Apollos? No; handsome portraits of Saturn, of King Priam, of aged Nestor, and of good Father Anchises upon his son's shoulders.

HARPAGON

That is admirable! 'T is a thing I should never have dreamt of; and I am overjoyed to learn that she has such a taste. In truth, had I been a woman, I should not have liked young fellows.

FROSINE

I should think not! Fine pills indeed, your young sparks, to be in love with! Pretty snivellers, nice little ladies'-men, for a woman to hanker after! And I 'd like to know what relish there is in them!

HARPAGON

For my part, I cannot comprehend it at all; and I don't know how women can like them so much.

FROSINE

One must be a born fool. Is it common-sense to find youth attractive? Are they men, your curly-pated coxcombs? Can one care for such creatures?

HARPAGON

That is what I say all the time; with their voices like milk-fed chickens, and their three little hairs of a moustache and beard, turned up like cat's whiskers, with their tow wigs, their broad flowing breeches, and their doublets undone.

FROSINE

Eh! They are finely set up, compared to a person like you! Now you 're a handsome figure of a man, you are; there is something worth looking at; and that is the build and the dress to inspire love.

HARPAGON

You think I 'll do?

FROSINE

Why! you are charming. Your face should be painted. Just turn round a little, please. Nothing could be better. Let me see you step off. Now there is a clean-cut figure, easy and free-moving as it should be, and showing no infirmities at all.

HARPAGON

I have no great ones, thank Heaven. [*Harpagon is seized with a coughing-fit.*] There is only my cough, that gets hold of me once in a while.

FROSINE

That is nothing at all. Your cough is really not unbecoming, you cough with a grace.

HARPAGON

Just tell me: has Mariane not seen me yet? Has she not noticed me as I passed?

FROSINE

No; but we have had long talks about you. I drew her a portrait of your person, and I did not fail to set forth your merits, and the advantage it would be for her to have a husband like you.

HARPAGON

You did well, and I thank you.

FROSINE

Sir, I have a bit of a request to make to you. I have a lawsuit that I am likely to lose for lack of a little money; (*Harpagon looks severe*) and you could easily win me this suit if you had the least kindness for me. You cannot conceive how glad she will be to see you. (*Harpagon looks cheerful again.*) Ah! how you will please her! what an admirable effect your old-fashioned ruff will produce on her fancy! But above all she will be charmed with your breeches fastened to the doublet with tie-points; that will be enough to make her dote on you; and a tie-point lover will have a wonderful relish for her.

HARPAGON

Really, you enrapture me by what you say.

FROSINE

Truly, sir, this suit is of the utmost consequence to me. (*Harpagon looks severe again.*) I am ruined if I lose it; but some little help would set my affairs to rights. I wish you had seen how enchanted she was to hear me talk of you. (*Harpagon looks cheerful again.*) Joy sparkled in her eyes at the recital of your virtues, and I brought her at last to the greatest eagerness to see this match concluded.

HARPAGON

You have done me a great kindness, Frosine; and I 'll own I am under all possible obligation to you.

FROSINE

I beg you, sir, to give me the slight help I ask of you. (*Harpagon looks serious again.*) It will set me on my feet and I shall be eternally grateful to you.

HARPAGON

Good-bye. I must go finish my letters.

FROSINE

I assure you, sir, that you could never relieve me in a greater necessity.

HARPAGON

I will give orders to have my coach ready, to take you to the fair.

FROSINE

I would not importune you were I not forced to it.

HARPAGON

And I will take care to have supper early, so that it may not make you ill.

FROSINE

Do not refuse the favour I beg of you. You cannot conceive, sir, the pleasure . . .

HARPAGON

I must be going. They are calling me now. Till this afternoon.

FROSINE, *alone*

Pox take you for the devil's own model of meanness. The skinflint was proof against all my attacks; but for all that I must n't give up this transaction; on the other side, at any rate, I am sure to get some return.

ACT III

SCENE I

HARPAGON, CLEANTE, ELISE, VALERE, MISTRESS CLAUDE, MASTER JACQUES, LA MERLUCHE, BRINDAVOINE

HARPAGON

Now, come here all of you; and let me distribute my orders for this afternoon, and assign each one his duties. Approach, Mistress Claude; I 'll begin with you. (*She has a broom in her hand.*) Good, I see you come armed. Your duty will be to clean up everywhere; and above all mind you don't rub the furniture too hard, for fear of wearing it out. Moreover, I set you in command of the bottle department during supper; and if anything be lost or broken, I shall hold you responsible for it, and take it out of your wages.

MASTER JACQUES, *aside*

A shrewd punishment.

HARPAGON, *to Mistress Claude*

You may go.

SCENE II

HARPAGON, CLEANTE, ELISE, VALERE, MASTER JACQUES, BRINDAVOINE, LA MERLUCHE

HARPAGON

You Brindavoine, and you, La Merluche, I place you in charge of washing the glasses and serving the wine; but only when people are thirsty, and not in the manner of certain impertinent lackeys, who come and tempt people, and put drinking into their heads when they are not thinking of it. Wait till it 's asked for more than once, and always remember to put in plenty of water.

MASTER JACQUES, *aside*

Yes. Wine without water goes to your head.

LA MERLUCHE

Shall we leave off our smocks?

HARPAGON

Yes, when you see the people coming; and take care not to spoil your clothes.

BRINDAVOINE

You know, sir, one of the fore-flaps of my doublet is covered with a great spot of lamp-oil.

LA MERLUCHE

And, sir, my breeches are so full of holes behind that folk can see, saving your presence . . .

HARPAGON, *to La Merluche*

Silence! Turn that side carefully toward the wall, and always face the company. (*Harpagon puts his*

hat in front of his doublet to show Brindavoine how to hide the oil-stain.) And you, hold your hat like this when you 're waiting on people.

SCENE III

HARPAGON, CLEANTE, ELISE, VALERE, LA MERLUCHE

HARPAGON

And you, daughter, keep an eye on what is taken from the table, and see to it that there is no waste. This is a becoming care for girls. And meanwhile make up your mind to be polite to my lady-love, for she is to pay you a visit and take you with her to the fair. Do you hear what I say?

ELISE

Yes, father.

SCENE IV

HARPAGON, CLEANTE, VALERE, MASTER JACQUES

HARPAGON

And you, my son the dandy, to whom I am so very good as to pardon what happened just now, don't go and take it into your head, either, to receive her ill.

CLEANTE

I, father? receive her ill! And why should I?

HARPAGON

Alack! we know the ways of children when their fathers marry again, and how they usually look upon

what is called a stepmother. But if you want me to forget your last escapade, I advise you above all to entertain her with a cheerful countenance, and in short, to give her the very best reception you can.

CLEANTE

To tell you the truth, I can't promise you to be glad that she should become my stepmother. I should be lying if I told you so; but as for receiving her well and pleasantly, I promise to obey you punctually on that point.

HARPAGON

See that you do.

CLEANTE

You shall find no reason to complain of me.

HARPAGON

That will be well.

SCENE V

HARPAGON, VALERE, MASTER JACQUES

HARPAGON

Valère, help me in this matter. Now then, Master Jacques, come here, I have kept you for the last.

MASTER JACQUES

Is it your cook, sir, or your coachman that you would speak to? For I am both one and t' other.

HARPAGON

'T is to both.

MASTER JACQUES

But to which one first?

HARPAGON

To the cook.

MASTER JACQUES

Then wait a minute, please. (*He takes off his coachman's great-coat, and appears dressed as a cook.*)

HARPAGON

What the deuce of a ceremony is this?

MASTER JACQUES

You have but to say on.

HARPAGON

Master Jacques, I have promised to give a supper this evening.

MASTER JACQUES, *aside*

A miracle!

HARPAGON

Now tell me: will you give us good cheer?

MASTER JACQUES

Yes, if you give me plenty of money.

HARPAGON

The devil, always money! They seem to have nothing else to say: money, money, money. Why! that is the one and only word in their mouths, money! Always talking of money! It 's their ever-ready answer, money!

VALERE

I never saw a more impertinent answer than that!

A great marvel indeed, to make good cheer with plenty of money! 'T is the easiest thing in the world, and any fool could do as much; but to show yourself a clever man, you must talk of making good cheer with little money.

MASTER JACQUES

Good cheer with little money!

VALERE

Yes.

MASTER JACQUES, *to Valère*

On my word, Mr. Steward, you will oblige us by showing us this secret, and taking my place as cook, since anyhow you set yourself up for factotum in this house.

HARPAGON

Hold your tongue. What must we have?

MASTER JACQUES

There is your worthy Mr. Steward, who will make you good cheer with little money.

HARPAGON

Enough! I 'll have you answer me.

MASTER JACQUES

How many of you will there be at table?

HARPAGON

We shall be eight or ten; but you must reckon for only eight. When there is enough to eat for eight, of course there is enough for ten.

VALERE

Of course.

MASTER JACQUES

Well! you must have four soups and five entrées. Soups . . . Entrées . . .[1]

HARPAGON

The devil! There 's enough to treat the whole town.

MASTER JACQUES

Roasts . . .

HARPAGON, *putting his hand over Master Jacques' mouth*

Ah! traitor, you 'll eat up all my substance.

MASTER JACQUES

Sweets . . .

HARPAGON, *again putting his hand over Master Jacques' mouth*

More yet?

VALERE, *to Master Jacques*

Do you want to make everybody burst? And has our master invited people to his house, to murder them by cramming? Go and read a little in the precepts of health, or ask the doctors if there is anything more injurious to man than eating to excess.

[1] The enumeration of the different soups, entrées, roasts, etc., is left to the imagination and the rapid elocution of the actor playing the rôle. In only one of the editions of Molière (that of 1682) is it written out. There the roast is described as follows: "Arranged in a pyramid on one exceeding great platter, a big loin of hand-fattened veal, three pheasants, three plump pullets, twelve pigeons, twelve grain-fed chickens, six young warren-rabbits, twelve partridges, two dozen quail, three dozen ortolans . . ."

HARPAGON

He is right.

VALERE

Learn, Master Jacques, you and your like, that a table overloaded with food is a den of assassins; that to show yourself really a friend to your guests, you must let frugality reign at your repasts; and that, as one of the ancients has said, *we must eat to live, and not live to eat.*

HARPAGON

Ah! how excellently said! Come here, and let me embrace you for that saying. 'T is the finest maxim I ever heard in my life: *We must live to eat, and not eat to li*— No, that 's not it. How did you say?

VALERE

That *we must eat to live, and not live to eat.*

HARPAGON, *to Master Jacques.*

Yes. Do you hear? (*To Valère*) Who is the great man who said that?

VALERE

I forget his name just now.

HARPAGON

Remember to write those words down for me; I 'll have them set in letters of gold over the mantel-piece of my dining-room.

VALERE

I will remember it. And as for your supper, you

have only to leave it to me; I will order it all just as it should be.

HARPAGON

Do so.

MASTER JACQUES

So much the better! All the less work for me.

HARPAGON, *to Valère*

You must have such things as people can't eat much of, things that are filling; some good fat mutton-stew, and a pot-pie well garnished with chestnuts. There, let there be abundance of that.

VALERE

Trust to me.

HARPAGON

Now, Master Jacques, you must clean my coach.

MASTER JACQUES

Wait; this is to the coachman. (*He puts on his coachman's great-coat again.*) You were saying . . .

HARPAGON

That you must clean my coach, and have my horses ready to drive to the fair . . .

MASTER JACQUES

Your horses, sir?[1] On my word, they 're in no condition to stir. I won't say they are laid up; the poor beasts have nothing to lie upon, so 't would be lying. But you make them observe such rigorous fasts that they 're nothing now but ideas, or phantoms, mere shapes or shades of horses.

[1] See the Introductory Note, p. 83.

HARPAGON

They are mighty ill off! They do nothing at all.

MASTER JACQUES

And because they do nothing, sir, must they eat nothing? It would be better for them, poor things, to work a great deal and to eat likewise. It breaks my heart to see them grown so thin. For, you know, I have a love for my horses, so that when I see them suffer, it seems as though 't were myself. Every day I take the food out of my own mouth to give them; and 't is too hard a nature, sir, that has no compassion on its fellow-creatures.

HARPAGON

'T will be no great labour to go as far as the fair.

MASTER JACQUES

No, sir, I have n't the heart to drive them, and I 'd think it a sin to give them the whip, in the state they 're in. How can you expect them to drag a coach, when they can't even drag themselves?

VALERE

Sir, I will get neighbour Picard to drive them; besides, we shall need this fellow here to prepare the supper.

MASTER JACQUES

Very well then. I 'd rather they should die under another's hand than under mine.

VALERE

Master Jacques is mighty considerate.

MASTER JACQUES

Mr. Steward is mighty indispensable.

HARPAGON

Silence!

MASTER JACQUES

Sir, I cannot endure flatterers; and I see that all he does, his eternal supervision of the bread, and wine, and wood, and salt, and candles, are only to curry favour with you, and to pay you court. It makes me furious, and I am enraged every day to hear what people say of you. For, the fact is, I have a real liking for you, in spite of everything, and next to my horses you are the person I care most for.

HARPAGON

Might I know from you, Master Jacques, what they say of me?

MASTER JACQUES

Yes, sir, if I were sure it would not make you angry.

HARPAGON

No, in no wise.

MASTER JACQUES

Pardon me; I know very well that I should put you in a passion.

HARPAGON

Not at all. On the contrary, you 'll be doing me a favour, and I shall be glad to learn how they talk of me.

MASTER JACQUES

Sir, since you will have it, I 'll tell you frankly that they make fun of you everywhere; that they pelt us from every quarter with a hundred gibes about you; and there 's nothing they like better than to haul you over the coals and tell tales without end of your stingy tricks. One says you have special almanacs printed, in which you double the number of ember-days and vigils, to profit by the extra fasts that you force your people to keep; another, that you are always ready to pick a quarrel with your servants at Christmas time, or when they leave you, to find a pretext for not giving them anything. One man tells how you once swore out a warrant against one of your neighbours' cats for having eaten the remains of a leg of mutton; another, how you were caught one night stealing your own horses' oats; and how your coachman, the one before me, gave you in the dark no end of a cudgelling, which you never chose to mention. In short, shall I tell you? There is no going anywhere but we hear you held up to ridicule. You are the byword and the laughing-stock of everybody; and you are never spoken of but under the names of miser, extortioner, curmudgeon, and skinflint.

HARPAGON, *beating him*

You are a fool, a rogue, a scoundrel, an impudent blackguard.

MASTER JACQUES

Well! Did n't I tell you so? But you would n't believe me. I said I should make you angry by telling you the truth.

HARPAGON

That 'll teach you how to speak.

SCENE VI

VALERE, MASTER JACQUES

VALERE, *laughing*

So far as I can see, Master Jacques, your frankness is ill-requited.

MASTER JACQUES

Zounds! Mr. Upstart, you play the man of consequence; but this is none of your business. Laugh at your own cudgelling when you get it, and don't come here laughing at mine.

VALERE

Oh! Mr. Master Jacques, don't get in a passion, I beg of you.

MASTER JACQUES, *aside*

He shows the white feather. I 'll put on a bold face, and if he is fool enough to fear me, I 'll give him a bit of a drubbing. (*Aloud*) Do you know, Mr. Laugher, that I 'm not laughing in the least, and if you provoke me, I 'll make you laugh on the other side of your face? (*Master Jacques pushes Valère to the side of the stage, threatening him.*)

VALERE

Eh! gently.

MASTER JACQUES

How, gently? And suppose I don't choose?

VALERE

I beg you.

MASTER JACQUES

You 're an impudent fellow.

VALERE

Mr. Master Jacques . . .

MASTER JACQUES

No, your Mr. Master Jacques won't serve. If I take a stick, I 'll drub you soundly.

VALERE

What ! a stick? (*Valère drives him back likewise.*)

MASTER JACQUES

Eh! I did n't mean just that.

VALERE

Do you know, Mr. Impudence, that I am a man to give you a sound drubbing yourself?

MASTER JACQUES

I 've no doubt of it.

VALERE

That when all 's said and done, you are nothing but a rapscallion of a cook?

MASTER JACQUES

I know it very well.

VALERE

And that you don't know me yet?

MASTER JACQUES

Forgive me.

VALERE

You 'll give me a drubbing, will you?

MASTER JACQUES

I said it in jest.

VALERE

And I have no taste for your jesting. (*He beats him.*) Learn that you are a sorry jester.

MASTER JACQUES, *alone*

Plague take sincerity! 'T is a bad trade; henceforth I give it up, and I 'll speak the truth no more. As for my master, let that pass; he has some right to beat me; but for this Mr. Steward, I 'll be revenged on him if I can.

SCENE VII

MARIANE, FROSINE, MASTER JACQUES

FROSINE

Do you know, Master Jacques, whether your master is at home?

MASTER JACQUES

Yes, indeed, he is; I know it only too well.

FROSINE

Tell him, please, that we are here.

SCENE VIII

MARIANE, FROSINE

MARIANE

Ah! what a strange state I am in, Frosine, and, to tell the truth, how I dread this meeting!

FROSINE

But why so? and what are you anxious about?

MARIANE

Alas! can you ask? Do you not imagine the alarm of one who is about to look on the rack to which she must be bound?

FROSINE

I see very well that Harpagon is not the rack you would choose, for a pleasant death; and I know, by your looks, that the young spark you told me of is still in your thoughts.

MARIANE

Yes, Frosine, 't is a thing I will not try to hide; and the respectful visits which he paid us have, I 'll own, made some impression on my heart.

FROSINE

But have you found out who he is?

MARIANE

No, I don't know who he is. But I know that he is handsome enough to win anyone's love, and that if things could be left to my choice, I 'd take him rather than any other; and so he has no little share in the responsibility for my horrible dread of the husband you would marry me to.

FROSINE

Alack! all these young sparks are agreeable, and plead their own cause very skilfully, but most of them are as poor as rats; you 'll do better to take an old husband who will bring you plenty of property. I

admit the senses will not be so well satisfied in this way, and there are some little unpleasant passages to be endured with such a husband; but it cannot last long; believe me, his death will soon put you in a position to take one more to your liking, who will make up for everything.

MARIANE

Oh dear! Frosine, 't is a strange thing when, to be happy, one must wish and wait for someone's death; and death does n't always follow out our plans.

FROSINE

Nonsense! You shall marry him only on condition that he soon leave you a widow; that is to be one of the articles of the marriage contract. It would be downright scandalous of him not to die within three months! Here he is himself.

MARIANE

Ah! Frosine, what a sight!

SCENE IX

HARPAGON, MARIANE, FROSINE

HARPAGON, *to Mariane*

Be not offended, my fair one, if I come to you with glasses on; I know your charms can be seen with the naked eye, and are visible enough of themselves, and that there is no need of glasses to perceive them; but still, 't is with glasses that we look at the stars; and I maintain and warrant that you are a star, yes, a star, the fairest star in all the land of

stars. Frosine, she does n't answer a word, and shows, methinks, no joy at seeing me.

FROSINE

'T is because she is as yet all surprise; and then, girls are always ashamed of showing their real feelings at the first.

HARPAGON, *to Frosine*

You are right. (*To Mariane*) Here is my daughter, pretty darling, come to greet you.

SCENE X

HARPAGON, ELISE, MARIANE, FROSINE

MARIANE

I am very late, madam, in paying you this visit.

ELISE

You have done, madam, what it was my duty to do, and 't was my place to forestall you in this.

HARPAGON

You see what a great girl she is; but ill weeds grow apace.

MARIANE, *aside to Frosine*

Oh! the odious man!

HARPAGON, *aside to Frosine*

What says the fair one?

FROSINE

That she thinks you admirable.

HARPAGON

'T is too much honour you do me, adorable darling.

MARIANE, *aside*

What a creature!

HARPAGON

I am more than obliged to you for these feelings.

MARIANE, *aside*

I cannot endure it any longer.

SCENE XI

HARPAGON, MARIANE, ELISE, CLEANTE, VALERE, FROSINE, BRINDAVOINE

HARPAGON

Here is my son, too, come to pay you his respects.

MARIANE, *aside to Frosine*

Ah! Frosine, what an encounter! This is the very one I told you of.

FROSINE, *to Mariane*

A wonderful adventure, indeed.

HARPAGON

I see that you are surprised at finding I have such big children; but I shall soon be rid of them both.

CLEANTE, *to Mariane*

Madam, to tell you the truth, this is an adventure which I certainly did not expect; and my father surprised me not a little when he told me just now of the plan he had formed.

MARIANE

I can say the same. 'T is an unexpected en-

counter which has surprised me as much as you; and I was not at all prepared for such a meeting.

CLEANTE

It is true, madam, that my father could not make a better choice, and that the honour of seeing you is a deep joy to me; but for all that I cannot assure you that I rejoice at the plan you may have formed to become my stepmother. That compliment, I 'll own, is too hard for me to pay; and 't is a title, if you 'll forgive me, which I do not wish you to have. This speech may seem brutal to some people, but I feel sure that you will know how to take it rightly; that you can well imagine the repugnance I must feel to this marriage; that, knowing me as you do, you cannot fail to see how it clashes with my interests; and that you will allow me to tell you, with my father's leave, that if matters depended on me, the marriage should not take place.

HARPAGON

That 's a mighty impertinent compliment. What a fine confession to make to her!

MARIANE

And I, to answer you, must say that things are very much the same with me; and that, if you would feel repugnance at having me for a stepmother, I should feel no less, I 'm sure, at having you for stepson. Do not think, pray, that it is I who seek to give you this displeasure. I should be very sorry to cause you any vexation; and I give you my word that unless I find myself absolutely forced to it, I shall not consent to the marriage which offends you.

HARPAGON

She is right. Answer a fool according to his folly. I ask your pardon, my pretty one, for my son's impertinence; he is a young dunce who does n't know the meaning of what he says.

MARIANE

I give you my word that what he has said did not offend me in the least; on the contrary, he has obliged me by thus expressing his true feelings. I love such an avowal from him, and if he had spoken otherwise, I should esteem him the less.

HARPAGON

It is very kind of you to be so willing to condone his faults. Time will teach him better, and you 'll find his sentiments will change.

CLEANTE

No, father, I am not capable of changing, and I earnestly beg the lady to believe it.

HARPAGON

Why, see his madness! He goes on still worse.

CLEANTE

Would you have me be false to my real feelings?

HARPAGON

What, again! Will you change your tone, sirrah?

CLEANTE

Well, then! since you wish me to speak in a different strain—madam, allow me now to put myself in my father's place, and swear to you that I have

never seen anything in the world so charming as yourself; that I can conceive nothing equal to the happiness of pleasing you; and that the title of your husband is an honour and a felicity which I should set above the destiny of the greatest princes upon earth. Yes, madam, the bliss of winning you is in my eyes the fairest of all good fortunes; and upon it I fix my whole ambition. There is nothing I would not do for so precious a conquest; and the greatest obstacles . . .

HARPAGON

Softly, my son, if you please.

CLEANTE

'T is a compliment I am paying the lady on your behalf.

HARPAGON

Bless me! I have a tongue to express myself with, and I don't need any such spokesman as you. Come, chairs here.

FROSINE

No; it would be better for us to go at once to the fair, so as to be back the sooner and have plenty of time afterward to converse.

HARPAGON, *to Brindavoine*

Have my horses put to the coach, then.

SCENE XII

HARPAGON, MARIANE, ELISE, CLEANTE, VALERE, FROSINE

HARPAGON, *to Mariane*

I beg you to excuse me, my fair one, for not

having thought to give you a little refreshment before you start.

CLEANTE

I have provided for it, father, and have ordered, in your name, a few dishes of China oranges, candied citron, and sweets.

HARPAGON, *aside to Valère*

Valère!

VALERE, *to Harpagon*

He 's lost his senses.

CLEANTE

Do you think, sir, 't is not enough? Madam will be so good as to excuse it, I am sure.

MARIANE

It was quite unnecessary.

CLEANTE

Madam, did you ever see a more brilliant diamond than the one my father is wearing?

MARIANE

It certainly is very brilliant.

CLEANTE, *taking the diamond from his father's finger, and giving it to Mariane*

You should examine it more closely.

MARIANE

It is a very fine one, indeed, and sparkles marvellously.

CLEANTE, *stepping in front of Mariane as she is about to give it back*

No, no, madam, it could not be in more beautiful hands. My father makes you a present of it.

HARPAGON

I?

CLEANTE

Is it not true, father, that you insist on the lady's keeping it for your sake.

HARPAGON, *aside to his son*

What?

CLEANTE, *to Mariane*

A fine question, indeed! He tells me I must force you to accept it.

MARIANE

But I don't want . . .

CLEANTE, *to Mariane*

Nonsense. He would never take it back for the world.

HARPAGON, *aside*

I shall go mad.

MARIANE.

It would be . . .

CLEANTE, *still preventing Mariane from returning the ring*

No, I tell you, 't would offend him.

MARIANE

I beg you.

CLEANTE

By no means.

HARPAGON, *aside*

Plague take . . .

CLEANTE

You see he is shocked at your refusal.

HARPAGON, *aside to his son*

Ah! you rascal!

CLEANTE, *to Mariane*

You see how hard he takes it.

HARPAGON, *aside to his son, threatening him*

Monster!

CLEANTE

Father, it is n't my fault, I 'm doing all I can to make her keep it; but she is obstinate.

HARPAGON, *aside to his son, in a rage*

Villain!

CLEANTE

Madam, you are setting my father against me.

HARPAGON, *aside to his son, with the same by-play*

Scoundrel!

CLEANTE, *to Mariane*

You will throw him into a fit of illness. I beg you, madam, do not resist any further.

FROSINE, *to Mariane*

Bless me! What a to-do! Keep the ring, since the gentleman must have it so.

MARIANE, *to Harpagon*

Not to make you angry, I will keep it for the present, and find some other occasion to give it back.

SCENE XIII

HARPAGON, MARIANE, ELISE, CLEANTE, VALERE, FROSINE, BRINDAVOINE

BRINDAVOINE

Sir, here 's a man wishes to speak to you.

HARPAGON

Tell him I am engaged, and bid him come back later.

BRINDAVOINE

He says he has some money for you.

HARPAGON, *to Mariane*

Please excuse me; I 'll be back presently.

SCENE XIV

HARPAGON, MARIANE, ELISE, CLEANTE, VALERE, FROSINE, LA MERLUCHE

LA MERLUCHE, *comes in running, and knocks Harpagon down*

Sir . . .

HARPAGON

Oh! I am killed!

CLEANTE

What is it, father? Did you hurt yourself?

HARPAGON

The scoundrel has certainly taken a bribe from my debtors to break my neck.

VALERE, *to Harpagon*

'T will be nothing.

LA MERLUCHE, *to Harpagon*

Sir, I beg your pardon; I thought I ought to make haste.

HARPAGON

And what for, assassin?

LA MERLUCHE

To tell you that both your horses are unshod.

HARPAGON

Take them straightway to the blacksmith.

CLEANTE

While we are waiting for them to be shod, I will do the honours of the house for you, father, and escort madam to the garden, where I will have the refreshment served.

SCENE XV

HARPAGON, VALERE

HARPAGON

Valère, please keep an eye on all this, and take

care, I beg you, to save as much as you can, to be sent back to the confectioner's.

VALERE

As you say, sir.

HARPAGON, *alone*

O rascal of a son, do you want to ruin me completely?

ACT IV

SCENE I

CLEANTE, MARIANE, ELISE, FROSINE

CLEANTE

Let us come in here, it will be much better. Now there is no one with us to be suspected, and we can speak freely.

ELISE

Yes, madam, my brother has confided to me his passion for you. I know the trouble and vexation which difficulties like yours may bring, and I assure you that I have the deepest sympathy for you both.

MARIANE

'T is a great consolation to have such sympathy as yours; and I beg you, madam, to let this noble friendship, that so much softens the cruelties of fortune to me, be enduring.

FROSINE

On my word, you are unlucky mortals, both of you, not to have let me know about your affair in the first place. I should certainly have saved you all this anxiety, and things would never have come to the pass where they are now.

CLEANTE

What can you expect? My ill-luck would have it so. But, fair Mariane, what do you determine upon?

MARIANE

Alas! am I in a position to determine upon anything? And, dependent as I am, can I do more than wish?

CLEANTE

Is there no other aid for me in your heart but mere wishes? no friendly pity? no helpful kindness? no active affection?

MARIANE

What can I say? Put yourself in my place, and think what I ought to do. Be yourself both counsellor and commander; I leave it all to you, and believe you are too reasonable to claim anything from me but what honour and propriety will allow.

CLEANTE

Alas! to what straits do you bring me, when you would have me be guided by the narrow dictates of a rigid honour and a scrupulous propriety.

MARIANE

But what would you have me do? Even if I could disregard the punctilios to which our sex is bound, I must consider my mother. She has brought me up with constant and loving care, and I could not bring myself to give her pain. You must try to persuade her, and do all you can to win her over; you may do and say anything you please,

I give you my consent; and so far as it depends only on me to declare in your favour, I will even promise to make full confession to her, myself, of my feelings toward you.

CLEANTE

Frosine, dear Frosine, won't you help us?

FROSINE

On my word, what a question! I wish I could, with all my heart. You know my natural disposition is kindly enough. Heaven did n't give me a heart of bronze, and I am only too happy to do any little service I can, when I find people that love each other in all honesty and honour. Now what can we do in this case?

CLEANTE

Think of something, I beg you.

MARIANE

Give us some suggestion.

ELISE

Find some means to undo what you have done.

FROSINE

That is rather hard. (*To Mariane*) As for your mother, she is not altogether unreasonable; perhaps she could be won over and persuaded to transfer to the son the gift she intends for the father. (*To Cléante*) But the mischief of it is, that your father is your father.

CLEANTE

Of course.

FROSINE

I mean, that he will lay it up against you if he is refused, and will not be in a humour after that to give his consent to your marriage. The best way would be to have the refusal come from him, and to try somehow to put him out of conceit with you, Mariane.

CLEANTE

You are right.

FROSINE

Yes, I am right, I know that very well. That is the thing to do, but the deuce of it is to find out how to do it. Wait: if there were some woman, getting on in years a little, with talents like mine, who could play a part well enough to counterfeit the lady of quality, by means of a hasty get-up and some outlandish title of a marquise or viscountess, supposed to be from Lower Brittany, I could manage to make your father believe she was possessed of a hundred thousand crowns in ready money, besides her estates; that she was madly in love with him, and so eager to be his wife that she would make over all her property by the marriage contract; and I have n't the slightest doubt he would lend a willing ear to the proposal. For 't is a fact that he is very much in love with you, I know, but he loves money somewhat more; and when, dazzled by this lure, he had once consented to set you free, 't would matter little afterward that he must be undeceived, when he came to look more closely into the possessions of our marquise.

CLEANTE

All this is very well contrived.

FROSINE

Trust me for that. I have just thought of a friend of mine who would be the very one to suit our purpose.

CLEANTE

You may be certain of my gratitude, Frosine, if you bring the thing off. But, dear Mariane, let us begin by winning your mother; 't will be no small matter to break off this marriage. Do all you can on your part, I beg you, use all the influence which her love for you gives you. Employ without reserve those eloquent graces, those irresistible charms which Heaven has set within your eyes and on your lips; spare none of those tender words, those sweet beseechings, and those loving caresses, which I am persuaded no one could resist.

MARIANE

I 'll do all I can, without fail.

SCENE II

HARPAGON, CLEANTE, MARIANE, ELISE, FROSINE

HARPAGON, *unseen by the others*

Hey-day! my son is kissing his future stepmother's hand, and his future stepmother does n't seem to dislike it. Can there be some mystery in this?

ELISE

Here comes my father.

HARPAGON

The coach is ready; you can start when you please.

CLEANTE

Since you are not going, father, I will escort them.

HARPAGON

No; stay here. They can go very well by themselves; and I want you.

SCENE III

HARPAGON, CLEANTE

HARPAGON

Now, stepmother apart, what do you think of this person?

CLEANTE

What I think of her?

HARPAGON

Yes, of her appearance, her figure, her looks, her wit?

CLEANTE

So-so.

HARPAGON

But speak out.

CLEANTE

Well, to speak candidly, I did not find her just now quite what I expected. Her air is that of a

regular coquette, her figure is rather awkward, her looks only middling, and her mind of the commonest. Not that I mean to put you out of conceit with her, father; since, as stepmothers go, I like this one as well as any.

HARPAGON.

But you were saying to her just now . . .

CLEANTE

I paid her some compliments in your name, but that was to gratify you.

HARPAGON

So then, you have n't any liking for her yourself?

CLEANTE

I? not the least.

HARPAGON

I 'm sorry, for that upsets a plan that had come into my head. When I saw her just now, it made me consider my age; and I was thinking that people might criticise me for marrying such a young girl. This consideration was about to make me give up the design; and since I have asked for her hand, and passed my word to her, I should have given her to you but for the aversion you show.

CLEANTE

To me?

HARPAGON

Yes, to you.

CLEANTE

For wife?

HARPAGON

For wife.

CLEANTE

Listen. It is true she is not much to my taste; but to please you, father, I will make up my mind to marry her, if you wish it.

HARPAGON

If I wish it? No, I am more reasonable than you think. I do not want to force your inclinations.

CLEANTE

Excuse me; I will bring myself to it, for your sake.

HARPAGON

No, no, a marriage cannot be happy without love.

CLEANTE

That may come afterward; they say that love is often the fruit of marriage.

HARPAGON

No. On the man's side, it should not be risked; there are vexatious consequences that I do not care to chance. If you had had some liking for her, well and good; I would have had you marry her in my place; but since you haven't, I will follow out my first plan, and marry her myself.

CLEANTE

Well, father, since this is the way things stand, I must open my heart to you, and reveal our secret. The truth is I have loved her ever since the first day I saw her, that I was intending to ask your consent

to our marriage; and nothing prevented me but the declaration of your own intentions, and the fear of displeasing you.

HARPAGON

Have you visited her?

CLEANTE

Yes, father.

HARPAGON

Often?

CLEANTE

Rather often, considering how short a time I have known her.

HARPAGON

You were well received?

CLEANTE

Very well, but without their knowing who I was; and that is what caused Mariane's surprise just now.

HARPAGON

Did you declare your passion for her, and tell her you meant to marry her?

CLEANTE

Yes; and I even made some overtures to her mother.

HARPAGON

Did she receive your proposal for her daughter favourably?

CLEANTE

Yes, very courteously.

HARPAGON

And does the girl return your love?

CLEANTE

If I may trust to appearances, I can flatter myself that she has some kindness for me.

HARPAGON, *aside*

I am very glad to have learned this secret; that is exactly what I wanted to know. (*Aloud*) Now look you, my son, I 'll tell you what. You are to make up your mind, please, to drop this love-affair of yours, to stop all your attentions to the lady I intend for myself, and to marry straightway the one I have picked out for you.

CLEANTE

So, father; this is the way you trick me! Well, as matters have come to this pass, I declare to you I shall not abandon my passion for Mariane; there is no extremity to which I will not go, to win her from you; and though you have on your side her mother's consent, I shall have other support, perhaps, on my side.

HARPAGON

What, rascal! You have the audacity to poach on my preserves!

CLEANTE

'T is you who poach on mine, I was the first comer.

HARPAGON

Am I not your father, and don't you owe me respect?

CLEANTE

These are not things in which children are obliged to defer to their parents; and love is no respecter of persons.

HARPAGON

I 'll teach you to respect me, with a good cudgelling.

CLEANTE

All your threats are of no account.

HARPAGON

You shall give up Mariane.

CLEANTE

Never.

HARPAGON

Give me a cudgel this instant.

SCENE IV

HARPAGON, CLEANTE, MASTER JACQUES

MASTER JACQUES

Hold, hold, gentlemen, what does this mean? What are you thinking of?

CLEANTE

A fig for your threats.

MASTER JACQUES, *to Cléante*

Ah! sir, softly.

HARPAGON

To speak to me with such impudence!

MASTER JACQUES, *to Harpagon*

Ah! sir, for Heaven's sake!

CLEANTE

I won't give up an inch.

MASTER JACQUES, *to Cléante*

What! to your father?

HARPAGON

Let me get at him.

MASTER JACQUES, *to Harpagon*

What! to your son? 'T was well enough to beat *me*, but . . .

HARPAGON

I will make you judge of our quarrel, Master Jacques, to show that I am right.

MASTER JACQUES

Very well. (*To Cléante*). Go further off.

HARPAGON

I am in love with a girl and mean to marry her; and the rascal has the impudence to love her as well, and to court her in spite of my orders.

MASTER JACQUES

Oh! he is wrong.

HARPAGON

Is n't it a shocking thing for a son to try to be his father's rival? And should n't he, in duty, abstain from interfering with my love?

MASTER JACQUES

You are right. Let me talk to him. You stay here. (*He goes to Cléante, at the other end of the stage.*)

CLEANTE, *to Master Jacques*

Well! yes, since he chooses you for judge, I will not refuse: 't is all one to me; and I am quite willing, Master Jacques, to make you the referee in our quarrel.

MASTER JACQUES

You do me great honour.

CLEANTE

I am in love with a young girl who returns my affection, and receives the offer of my heart with favour; and now my father takes it into his head to interfere with our love by asking for her in marriage.

MASTER JACQUES

He is certainly wrong.

CLEANTE

Is he not ashamed, at his time of life, to think of marrying? Is it becoming in him to be in love? and ought he not to leave this to young folks?

MASTER JACQUES

You are right, he has no business with it. Let me say a word to him. (*He goes back to Harpagon.*) Well! your son is not so obstinate as you say. He submits to reason. He says he knows the respect he owes to you; that he was only carried away in the first heat of passion, and that he will not

refuse to submit to anything you please, if you will only treat him more kindly and give him a wife that he may have reason to be satisfied with.

HARPAGON

Ah! Tell him, Master Jacques, that on this condition he may hope for everything from me, and that with the exception of Mariane, I leave him free to choose any one he pleases.

MASTER JACQUES

Trust to me. (*He goes to the son.*) Well! Your father is not so unreasonable as you make him out; he told me that it was your violence which made him angry; that he is offended only at your manner of behaviour, and will be quite ready to grant you what you wish, provided you go about it gently and show him the deference, respect, and submission that a son owes his father.

CLEANTE

Ah, Master Jacques, you may assure him that if he grants me Mariane, he shall always find me the most submissive of men; and that I shall never do anything against his will.

MASTER JACQUES, *to Harpagon*

It is settled; he consents to what you say.

HARPAGON

That is excellent.

MASTER JACQUES, *to Cléante*

Everything is arranged. He is satisfied with your promises.

CLEANTE

Heaven be praised!

MASTER JACQUES

Gentlemen, you have only to talk it over together; you are now agreed; and you were on the point of quarrelling for lack of a mutual understanding.

CLEANTE

Good Master Jacques, I shall be grateful to you all my life.

MASTER JACQUES

Don't mention it, sir.

HARPAGON

You have done me a good turn, Master Jacques; and one that deserves a reward. (*Harpagon feels in his pocket; Master Jacques holds out his hand; but Harpagon merely pulls out his handkerchief, saying:*) Go now. I shall remember it, I assure you.

MASTER JACQUES

I thank you kindly, sir.

SCENE V

HARPAGON, CLEANTE

CLEANTE

I beg your pardon, father, for the anger that I showed.

HARPAGON

'T is nothing.

CLEANTE

I assure you I regret it extremely.

HARPAGON

And I am extremely rejoiced to find you reasonable.

CLEANTE

What kindness in you to forget my fault so quickly!

HARPAGON

One easily forgets the faults of one's children when they return to their duty.

CLEANTE

What! Harbour no resentment for all my extravagant behaviour?

HARPAGON

You make me forget it by the submission and respect which you show now.

CLEANTE

I promise you, father, that so long as I live, I shall cherish in my heart the memory of your goodness.

HARPAGON

And I promise you there shall be nothing I will not grant you.

CLEANTE

Ah! father, I ask nothing more of you; you have given me enough in giving me Mariane.

HARPAGON

What?

CLEANTE

I say, father, that you have made me more than happy; and I find everything included in the favour of yielding Mariane to me.

HARPAGON

Who said anything about yielding Mariane to you?

CLEANTE

You, father.

HARPAGON

I?

CLEANTE

Surely.

HARPAGON

What! 't is you who promised to give her up.

CLEANTE

I, give her up?

HARPAGON

Yes.

CLEANTE

Never.

HARPAGON

You have not abandoned your pretension to her?

CLEANTE

On the contrary, I am more bent on it than ever.

HARPAGON

What, you scoundrel, again?

CLEANTE

Nothing can change me.

HARPAGON

Let me get at you, wretch.

CLEANTE

Do all you please.

HARPAGON

I forbid you my presence for ever.

CLEANTE

Good.

HARPAGON

I abandon you.

CLEANTE

Abandon.

HARPAGON

I renounce you for my son.

CLEANTE

Renounce.

HARPAGON

I disinherit you.

CLEANTE

As you will.

HARPAGON

And I give you my curse.

CLEANTE

I want none of your gifts.

SCENE VI

CLEANTE, LA FLECHE

LA FLECHE, *coming from the garden with a strong-box*

Oh! sir, I have found you in the nick of time! Follow me quickly.

CLEANTE

What is it?

LA FLECHE

Follow me, I tell you; we are all right.

CLEANTE

How?

LA FLECHE

Here is the very thing for you.

CLEANTE

What?

LA FLECHE

I have had my eye on it all day.

CLEANTE

What is it?

LA FLECHE

Your father's treasure, which I have nabbed.

CLEANTE

How did you do it?

LA FLECHE

I will tell you. But let us be off; I hear him calling out.

SCENE VII

HARPAGON, *shouting "Stop thief" from the garden, and running in without his hat*

Stop thief! stop thief! murder! bloody murder! Justice, just Heaven! I am ruined, I am killed! They 've cut my throat; they 've stolen my money. Who can it be? What has become of him? Where is he? Where is he hiding? What shall I do to find him? Where shall I run? Where not run? Is n't he there? Is n't he here? Who are you? Stop. (*He clutches himself by the arm.*) Give me back my money, you scoundrel! Ah! 't is myself! My mind 's distraught, I don't know where I am, or who I am, or what I 'm doing. Alas! my poor money! my poor money! my dear friend! they 've taken you away; and since you 're gone, I 've lost my comfort, my consolation, my joy; all 's over with me, life 's not worth living any more. Without you, it is impossible for me to exist. 'T is all over, I am done for; I die; I am dead; I am buried. Is there no one who will raise me from the dead by giving me back my dear money, or telling me who took it? Eh? what 's that you say? There 's nobody there.

Whoever did the deed must have watched his chance with the greatest care; he chose the very moment when I was talking to my villain of a son. I must go. I 'll fetch the magistrates, and have everybody in my house put to the torture: maids, lackeys, son, and daughter, and myself too. What a crowd of people! Everybody I see arouses my suspicion, everything seems to be my thief. Eh! what are you talking of down here? of the man who robbed me? What 's the noise up there? Is my thief among you? For Heaven's sake, if you know anything about my thief, I beseech you to tell me. Is n't he hidden among you? They all stare at me and begin to laugh. You will find they surely had a share in the robbery. Here, quick, magistrates, watchmen, provosts, judges, racks, gibbets, and executioners. I 'll have the whole world hung; and if I don't find my money, I 'll hang myself after.

ACT V

SCENE I

HARPAGON, A POLICE MAGISTRATE, HIS CLERK

THE MAGISTRATE

Trust all to me; I know my trade, thank Heaven. This is not the first time I've been employed in thief-catching; and I wish I had as many bags of a thousand francs as I have had men hung.

HARPAGON

'T is the interest of every magistrate to take this affair in hand; and if they don't get me my money back, I shall demand justice upon justice itself.

THE MAGISTRATE

We must make all necessary investigations. You say there was in this strong-box . . .

HARPAGON

Ten thousand crowns, full count.

THE MAGISTRATE

Ten thousand crowns!

HARPAGON, *weeping*

Ten thousand crowns.

THE MAGISTRATE

'T is a serious robbery!

HARPAGON

There is no penalty great enough for the enormity of the crime; and if it remains unpunished, the most sacred things are no longer secure.

THE MAGISTRATE

In what coin was the sum?

HARPAGON

In good gold louis and pistoles of full weight.

THE MAGISTRATE

Whom do you suspect of the robbery?

HARPAGON

Everybody; and I 'll have you arrest the whole city and suburbs.

THE MAGISTRATE

If you 'll follow my advice, you must not frighten any one, but try to get hold of some proof by gentle means, in order to proceed afterwards by severe measures to the recovery of the money that has been taken from you.

SCENE II

HARPAGON, THE MAGISTRATE, THE CLERK, MASTER JACQUES

MASTER JACQUES, *at the back of the stage, turning toward the door he came in by*

I 'll be back presently. Cut me his throat at once;

singe me his feet; scald him in boiling water, and hang him to the ceiling.

HARPAGON, *to Master Jacques*

Who? the man that robbed me?

MASTER JACQUES

I am speaking of a sucking-pig that your steward has just sent me; I mean to dress him for you according to my fancy.

HARPAGON

That is not the question; here is a gentleman you must talk with about a different matter.

THE MAGISTRATE, *to Master Jacques*

Do not be alarmed. I am not the man to bring disgrace upon you; and things shall go gently.

MASTER JACQUES

This gentleman is a guest at your supper?

THE MAGISTRATE

In this case, my good man, you must hide nothing from your master.

MASTER JACQUES

On my word, sir, I shall show all my skill, and do my best by you.

HARPAGON

That 's not the thing.

MASTER JACQUES

If I don't give you as good cheer as I should like,

't is the fault of our steward, who has clipped my wings with the scissors of his economy.

HARPAGON

Scoundrel! We have other matters to talk about besides supper; and I 'll have you tell me news of the money they 've stolen from me.

MASTER JACQUES

They 've stolen money from you?

HARPAGON

Yes, rascal; and I shall hang you if you don't give it back to me.

THE MAGISTRATE, *to Harpagon*

Bless me! Don't ill-treat him. I see by his looks that he is an honest fellow, and that without being sent to prison he 'll reveal what you want to know. Yes, friend, if you confess the thing to us, no harm shall come to you, and you shall be properly rewarded by your master. His money was stolen to-day, and you must certainly know something about the affair.

MASTER JACQUES, *aside*

Here 's the very thing for a vengeance on our steward. Ever since he came into the house, he 's been the favourite; no advice is taken but his; and the beating I got just now still sticks in my crop.

HARPAGON

What are you muttering?

THE MAGISTRATE, *to Harpagon*

Let him alone. He is getting ready to satisfy you. Did n't I tell you he was an honest fellow?

MASTER JACQUES

Sir, if you want me to tell you what I know, I think 't is your dear Master Steward that did the deed.

HARPAGON

Valère?

MASTER JACQUES

Yes.

HARPAGON

He, who seemed so faithful to me?

MASTER JACQUES

The very same. I think he is the one that robbed you.

HARPAGON

And why do you think so?

MASTER JACQUES

Why?

HARPAGON

Yes.

MASTER JACQUES

I think so . . . because I think so.

THE MAGISTRATE

But you must tell us what evidence you have.

HARPAGON

Have you seen him prowling round the place where I hid my money?

MASTER JACQUES

Yes, certainly. Where was your money?

HARPAGON

In the garden.

MASTER JACQUES

Exactly. I saw him prowling round in the garden. And what was your money in?

HARPAGON

In a strong-box.

MASTER JACQUES

The very thing. I saw him with a strong-box.

HARPAGON

And what was this strong-box like? I can easily tell whether it was mine.

MASTER JACQUES

What was it like?

HARPAGON

Yes.

MASTER JACQUES

It was like . . . it was like a strong-box.

THE MAGISTRATE

Of course. But describe it a little so that we can tell.

MASTER JACQUES

It was a large strong-box.

HARPAGON

The one they stole from me was a small one.

MASTER JACQUES

Oh! yes, it was a small one, if you choose to take it that way; but I call it large in view of its contents.

THE MAGISTRATE

And what was its colour?

MASTER JACQUES

What colour? Its colour was—why, a certain colour—can't you help me to find the word?

HARPAGON

Eh?

MASTER JACQUES

Was n't it red?

HARPAGON

No, grey.

MASTER JACQUES

Why yes, greyish-red; that 's what I meant.

HARPAGON

There 's no doubt; that is certainly it. Write, sir, write down his deposition. Heavens! whom can a man trust after this! There 's no depending on anything. It 's enough to make me believe I am capable of robbing myself.

MASTER JACQUES, *to Harpagon*

Sir, here he is back again. In any case, don't tell him 't was I that let it out.

SCENE III

HARPAGON, THE MAGISTRATE, HIS CLERK, VALERE, MASTER JACQUES

HARPAGON

Come here. Come and confess the blackest deed, the most horrible outrage that was ever committed.

VALERE

What do you mean, sir?

HARPAGON

What, you traitor! Don't you blush at your crime?

VALERE

What crime do you mean?

HARPAGON

What crime do I mean, villain? As if you did n't know what I mean! It 's no use for you to try to hide it; the thing is discovered, I 've just learned all about it. How could you abuse my kindness so, and enter my house on purpose to betray me, to play me such a base trick?

VALERE

Sir, since everything has been revealed, I will not try to prevaricate, or deny the fact.

MASTER JACQUES, *aside*

Oh ho! can I have hit the truth without knowing it?

VALERE

I was intending to speak to you about it, and only waiting for a favourable opportunity; but since things are as they are, I beseech you not to get angry, and to listen to my reasons.

HARPAGON

And what fine reasons can you give me, you infamous thief?

VALERE

Ah! sir, I have not deserved such names. 'T is true I have wronged you; but, after all, my fault is pardonable.

HARPAGON

What! pardonable! Such a treacherous ambuscade, such bloody murder!

VALERE

I beg you, don't be angry. When you have heard me you will see that the harm is not so great as you make it out.

HARPAGON

The harm not so great as I make it out! You scoundrel, my very flesh and blood!

VALERE

Your flesh and blood, sir, has not fallen into bad hands. I was not born so base as to do it any harm; and there is nothing in all this but what I can very well repair.

HARPAGON

And I very well mean you shall, by giving back what you have stolen from me.

VALERE

Your honour, sir, shall be fully satisfied.

HARPAGON

There is no question of honour in it. But tell me who prompted you to such a deed?

VALERE

Alas, can you ask me?

HARPAGON

Yes, indeed, I should think I do ask you.

VALERE

A god who brings with him full absolution for all that he makes men do—Love.

HARPAGON

Love?

VALERE

Yes.

HARPAGON

A pretty love, a pretty love, indeed! The love of my gold pieces.

VALERE

No, sir, it is not your wealth that tempted me; that is not what dazzled me; and I swear I make no

claim to any of your property, if you will only leave me what I have.

HARPAGON

I 'll do no such thing, by all the devils in hell; I 'll leave you nothing. Just see what insolence, to want to keep what he has robbed me of.

VALERE

Do you call it robbery?

HARPAGON

Do I call it robbery? Such a treasure as that?

VALERE

A treasure indeed, no doubt of it, and the most precious you possess; but you will not lose it by letting me keep it. On my knees I beg you for this charming treasure; and if you would do what is right, you must needs let me have it.

HARPAGON

I 'll do no such thing. What is the meaning of all this?

VALERE

We have pledged our faith to each other, and have sworn never to part.

HARPAGON

An admirable oath, and a comical promise!

VALERE

Yes, we have engaged ourselves to each other forever.

HARPAGON

I 'll disengage you, be sure of that.

VALERE

Nothing but death can separate us.

HARPAGON

You are devilishly enamoured of my money!

VALERE

I have already told you, sir, that it was not selfish policy which prompted me to do what I have done. My heart was not influenced by such motives as you think, and a nobler impulse inspired me.

HARPAGON

It will turn out to be for Christian charity that he covets my money! But I 'll see to that; and the law, you bare-faced knave, shall give me full satisfaction.

VALERE

You may do as you please; and I am ready to suffer all the violence you will; but I beg you at least to believe that if there be any harm, I am alone responsible for it, and your daughter is in no wise at fault in all this.

HARPAGON

I should think not, indeed! 'T would be very strange if my daughter had any hand in the crime. But I will have my property back, and you shall confess to what place you have carried it off.

VALERE

But I have n't carried it off; it is still in your house.

HARPAGON, *aside*

Oh, my beloved strong-box! (*Aloud*) Still in my house?

VALERE

Yes.

HARPAGON

Eh! now tell me: you have n't been tampering with it?

VALERE

I, tampering? Oh! you wrong us both; 't is with a pure and respectful passion that I burn.

HARPAGON, *aside*

Burn, for my strong-box!

VALERE

I should rather die than have betrayed any disrespectful thought; there was too much honesty, too much purity, for that.

HARPAGON

Purity! my strong-box!

VALERE

All my desires were limited to the joy of sight; and nothing criminal profaned the passion which that beauty inspired.

HARPAGON

The beauty of my strong-box! He talks of it as a lover of his mistress.

VALERE

Mistress Claude, sir, knows the truth about it; and she will bear me out.

HARPAGON

What! my servant is an accomplice in the affair?

VALERE

Yes, sir, she was a witness of our engagement; and it was after being assured of my honourable intentions that she helped me persuade your daughter to give me her word and receive mine.

HARPAGON

Eh? does fear of the law make him rave? (*To Valère*) What nonsense are you talking about my daughter?

VALERE

I am telling you, sir, that I had the greatest difficulty in making her modesty consent to my desires.

HARPAGON

Whose modesty?

VALERE

Your daughter's; and 't was not till yesterday that she could bring herself to sign with me the promise of marriage.

HARPAGON

My daughter has signed a promise to marry you?

VALERE

Yes, sir, as I on my part have signed one to marry her.

HARPAGON

O Heavens! a new misfortune.

MASTER JACQUES, *to the magistrate's clerk*

Write it down, sir, write it down.

HARPAGON

Aggravation of misery! Increase of despair! (*To the magistrate*) Here, sir, do the duty of your office, and draw me up his indictment as thief and as suborner.

MASTER JACQUES

As thief and as suborner.

VALERE

Those are titles that do not belong to me; and when it is known who I am . . .

SCENE IV

HARPAGON, ELISE, MARIANE, VALERE, FROSINE, MASTER JACQUES, THE MAGISTRATE, HIS CLERK

HARPAGON

Ah! wicked child! Child unworthy of such a father as I! This is the way you put my precepts into practice? You let yourself fall in love with an infamous robber, and pledge him your troth without my consent! But you shall be well fooled, both of you. (*To Elise*) Four strong walls shall answer for

your conduct; (*to Valère*) and a good gallows shall pay me for your presumption.

VALERE

Your passion will not be judge in the matter; and I shall at least be heard before I am condemned.

HARPAGON

I was wrong to say a gallows; you shall be broken alive on the wheel.

ELISE, *kneeling to her father*

Oh! father, I beseech you be not so inhuman, and do not go to the utmost extremity of your paternal power. Do not let yourself be carried away by the first impulse of anger, but give yourself time to think before you act. Try to see more truly the man who has offended you. He is not at all what you think; and you will find it less strange that I should have given myself to him, when you learn that, but for him, you would long ago have lost me forever. Yes, father, it was he who saved me when I was in such great danger of being drowned, and to whom you owe the life of that very daughter you . . .

HARPAGON

All that is nothing; 't would have been better for me if he had let you drown rather than do what he has done.

ELISE

Sir, I adjure you by a father's love . . .

HARPAGON

No, no; I will hear nothing, the law must take its course.

MASTER JACQUES, *aside*

You shall pay me for your cudgelling!

FROSINE, *aside*

Here 's a pretty kettle o' fish!

SCENE V

ANSELME, HARPAGON, ELISE, MARIANE, FROSINE, VALERE, THE MAGISTRATE, HIS CLERK, MASTER JACQUES

ANSELME

What is the matter, Signior Harpagon? I find you very much ruffled.

HARPAGON

Ah! Signior Anselme, you find me the unluckiest of men; here is a mighty confusion and disorder come to spoil the contract you 're to sign! I am slain in my fortune, I am slain in my honour; there stands a traitor, a scoundrel, who has violated all the most sacred rights, who has crept into my house under the guise of a servant, to rob me of my money, and to seduce my daughter.

VALERE

Who 's thinking of your money, that you make such an eternal pother about?

HARPAGON

Yes, they 've given each other a promise of mar-

riage. This affront concerns you, Signior Anselme, and 't is you must sue him, and take all legal measures, at your own expense, to be avenged for his insolence.

ANSELME

It is no intent of mine to force anyone to marry me, or to make any claim to a heart that has already bestowed itself elsewhere; but so far as your interests are involved, I am ready to embrace them as if they were my own.

HARPAGON

This gentleman here is an honest magistrate who tells me he 'll forget no part of the duty of his office. (*To the Magistrate, pointing to Valère*) Charge him roundly, sir, and make the crime black as you can.

VALERE

I don't see how you can make a crime of my passion for your daughter; and the punishment to which you think I can be condemned on account of our engagement, when it is known who I am . . .

HARPAGON

A fig for your fairy-tales; the world nowadays is full of nothing but these pretenders to nobility, these impostors who make capital of their obscurity, and unblushingly trick themselves out in the first illustrious name that comes into their heads.

VALERE

Know that I am too honest a man to wear anything that is not mine; and all Naples can bear witness to my birth.

ANSELME

Softly! Take care what you are saying. You risk more than you think; for you are speaking before a man who knows all Naples, and can easily see through your story.

VALERE, *putting on his hat proudly*

I have nothing to fear; and if you know Naples, you know who Don Thomas d'Alburci was.

ANSELME

Certainly I do; few people knew him better than I.

HARPAGON

I don't care a straw for Don Thomas or Don Martin either. (*Seeing two candles lighted, he blows out one.*)[1]

ANSELME

Pray, let him go on; we shall see what he has to say of him.

VALERE

I have this to say, that he was my father.

ANSELME

He?

[1] Somewhat to relieve the tediousness of the rest of the scene, with its improbable events and stilted language, this by-play is continued by the actors; Harpagon turns his back, and Master Jacques lights the candle again. Harpagon, seeing it lighted, seizes it, blows it out, and keeps it in his hand. But while he is listening, with his arms folded, to the conversation between Anselme and Valère, Master Jacques goes around behind him and lights the candle once more. Harpagon starts to make a gesture, sees the candle burning, blows it out again, and sticks it in his breeches pocket. Master Jacques takes care to light it yet again, for the fourth time. This time Harpagon burns his hand in the flame.

VALERE

Yes.

ANSELME

Come, come, this is nonsense. Find some more likely story, and do not expect to save yourself by this imposture.

VALERE

Consider your words. This is not an imposture, and I am claiming nothing but what I can easily prove.

ANSELME

What! you dare to call yourself the son of Don Thomas d'Alburci?

VALERE

I do; and I am ready to maintain the truth of it against any person whatsoever.

ANSELME

What amazing assurance! Learn, to your confusion, that it is sixteen years at least since the man you speak of was lost at sea with his wife and children, while fleeing to save them from the cruel persecutions during the revolution in Naples, which caused the exile of so many noble families.

VALERE

Yes; but learn to your confusion that his son, seven years old, and a servant, were saved from the wreck by a Spanish vessel; and that that son is now speaking to you. Learn too, that the captain of this vessel was touched by my misfortune, and took a

liking to me; he brought me up as his own son, and arms have been my profession since I was old enough to bear them; I learned but lately that my father was not dead, as I had always thought; and, coming this way in search of him, by a providential accident I met the charming Elise; the sight of her made me slave to her beauty; and the violence of my love, and her father's harshness, made me resolve to enter his house, and send some one else in quest of my parents.

ANSELME

But what proofs, other than your own words, can assure us that this is not a fable you have based upon truth?

VALERE

The Spanish captain; a ruby seal that belonged to my father; an agate bracelet that my mother had put on my arm; and old Pedro, the servant who was saved from the wreck with me.

MARIANE

Ah! now I can answer for it that you are no impostor; everything you say proves to me that you are my brother.

VALERE

You, my sister?

MARIANE

Yes. My heart was moved the moment you began to speak; our mother, who will be overjoyed, has told me a thousand times the story of our family misfortunes. Heaven saved us also from that dread-

ful shipwreck; but it saved our lives at the cost of our liberty; we were picked up by pirates from the wreckage of our vessel. After ten years of slavery, a lucky chance gave back our liberty, and we returned to Naples, but found all our estates sold, and could get no news of my father. Then we went to Genoa, where my mother hoped to gather up some poor remnants of a dissipated inheritance; and from there, fleeing from the barbarous injustice of her relatives, she came to this town, where she has lived since then as best she could.

ANSELME

O Heaven! how great are the manifestations of thy power! How clearly dost thou show that thou alone canst do miracles! Embrace me, my children; and join your transports with your father's.

VALERE

You are our father?

MARIANE

Was it you my mother so often wept for?

ANSELME

Yes, my daughter; yes, my son; I am Don Thomas d'Alburci, whom Heaven saved from the waves, with all the money he had with him; and who, having thought you all dead for more than sixteen years, was preparing, after long journeyings, to seek the comfort of a new family by marrying some gentle and discreet person. The little security there was for my life in returning to Naples made me give that up forever, and having found means to sell what I

had there, I have settled here, and, under the name of Anselme, have tried to banish the sorrows of that other name which brought so much misfortune on me.

HARPAGON, *to Anselme*

That is your son?

ANSELME

Yes.

HARPAGON

Then I hold you liable for the ten thousand crowns he has stolen from me.

ANSELME

He! stolen from you?

HARPAGON

Yes, he.

VALERE

Who dares say that?

HARPAGON

Master Jacques.

VALERE, *to Master Jacques*

You say so?

MASTER JACQUES

You see very well that I say nothing at all.

HARPAGON

Yes. Here 's the magistrate who took his deposition.

VALERE

Can you believe me capable of so base an act?

HARPAGON

Capable or not capable, I must have my money back.

SCENE VI

HARPAGON, ANSELME, ELISE, MARIANE, CLEANTE, VALERE, FROSINE, THE MAGISTRATE, HIS CLERK, MASTER JACQUES, LA FLECHE

CLEANTE

Don't torment yourself, father, and don't accuse anyone. I have news of your affair, and I come now to tell you that if you will make up your mind to let me marry Mariane, your money shall be returned to you.

HARPAGON

Where is it?

CLEANTE

Give yourself no anxiety. It is where I can answer for it; and everything depends on me. You have only to say what you decide; you have your choice, either to give me Mariane, or to give up your strong-box.

HARPAGON

Has nothing been taken out of it?

CLEANTE

Nothing at all. Consider whether you mean to agree to the marriage and add your consent to that of her mother, who leaves her free to choose between us.

MARIANE, *to Cléante*

But you do not know yet that her consent is not

enough; and that Heaven has just restored to me both my brother here (*pointing to Valère*), and a father (*pointing to Anselme*), from whom you must obtain me.

ANSELME

Heaven, my children, has not restored me to you to oppose your desires. Signior Harpagon, you can well conceive that a young person's choice will fall upon the son rather than upon the father; come, do not compel me to say what there is no need for you to hear, but give your consent, as I do mine, to the double marriage.

HARPAGON

To be well advised, I must see my strong-box.

CLEANTE

You shall see it safe and sound.

HARPAGON

I have no money to give my children in marriage.

ANSELME

Well! I have enough for them. Do not let that trouble you.

HARPAGON

Will you promise to pay all the expenses of both weddings?

ANSELME

Yes, I promise. Are you satisfied?

HARPAGON

Yes, provided you will order me a suit of clothes for the ceremony.

ANSELME

Very well. And now let us enjoy the delight which this happy day brings us.

THE MAGISTRATE

Hold, gentlemen, hold! Softly, pray. Who will pay me for my writings?

HARPAGON

We have no use for your writings.

THE MAGISTRATE

I know it, but I don't intend to have done them for nothing.

HARPAGON, *pointing to Master Jacques*

For payment, there 's a fellow I give you to hang.

MASTER JACQUES

Alas! What is one to do? I get a beating for telling the truth, and I am to be hanged for lying.

ANSELME

Signior Harpagon, you must pardon him his deceit.

HARPAGON

Then you 'll pay the magistrate?

ANSELME

Agreed. Now let us go quickly to tell your mother of our joy.

HARPAGON

And I, to see my beloved strong-box.

LE
BOURGEOIS GENTILHOMME

COMEDIE-BALLET EN CINQ ACTES

14 OCTOBRE, 1670

THE TRADESMAN TURNED GENTLEMAN

A COMEDY-BALLET IN FIVE ACTS

OCTOBER 14, 1670

(The original is in prose, with lyric interludes)

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The Tradesman turned Gentleman is perhaps the best of the many court entertainments, uniting music, dancing, and comedy, which Molière furnished for the diversion of King Louis. For his contemporaries, the chief interest of it was in the interludes of song and dance, and especially in the "Turkish ceremony" which the king himself had asked Molière to provide for. The royal treasury expended on the arrangements, including music, costumes, the two visits of Molière's troupe to the court, etc., no less than 49,404 francs and 18 sous—counted with Mr. Jourdain's own exactness—which was an exceeding large sum for those days.

For us, however, the chief interest of the play lies in its characters and its humour, in the way in which Molière has after all let the dramatic element dominate the rest, the skill with which he has made the interludes seem an almost necessary part of the action, the truth to life with which he has kept within the bounds of possibility though his subject seemed to lead inevitably to extravagant farce, and has given us, once for all, the eternal human comedy of the snob. Farcical and almost impossible as the last part of the play may seem, it was to receive an odd justification in real life sixteen years after it was produced, in the case of the Abbé de Saint-Martin, a worthy citizen and generous benefactor of his native city of Caen, who was led to believe that the king of Siam, having read and admired his works, had made him a Mandarin and Marquis of Mispou in New France ; and, after having been installed in his new dignities by a company of University students in disguise, with ceremonies lasting for two days and stranger than any imagined by Molière, he never suspected the genuineness of these titles, and signed them with his name, to the end of his life.

CHARACTERS	ACTORS
Mr. Jourdain	Moliere
Mrs. Jourdain, his wife	Hubert
Lucile, his daughter	Mlle. Moliere
Cleonte, suitor of Lucile	
Dorimene, a marquise	Mlle. Debrie
Dorante, a count, in love with Dorimène	La Grange
Nicole, servant to Mr. Jourdain	Mlle. Beauval
Covielle, valet to Cléonte	Du Croisy
A Music-Master	Hubert
His Scholar	Gaye
A Dancing-Master	La Thorilliere
A Fencing-Master	Debrie
A Philosophy-Master	Du Croisy
A Master Tailor	
A Journeyman Tailor	Beauval
Two Lackeys	

Musicians, Dancers, Cooks, Journeymen Tailors, and other characters to dance in the interludes

The scene is at Paris

THE TRADESMAN TURNED GENTLEMAN

A MUSICAL COMEDY

ACT I

Overture, played by a full orchestra; in the middle of the stage the Music-Master's Scholar, seated at a table, is composing the air for a serenade which Mr. Jourdain has ordered.

SCENE I

MUSIC-MASTER, DANCING-MASTER, THREE SINGERS, TWO VIOLINISTS, FOUR DANCERS

MUSIC-MASTER, *to the singers*

Here, step inside, and wait until he comes.

DANCING-MASTER, *to the dancers*

And you too, this way.

MUSIC-MASTER, *to his scholar*

Is it finished?

SCHOLAR

Yes.

MUSIC-MASTER

Let 's see . . . That 's good.

DANCING-MASTER

Is it something new?

MUSIC-MASTER

Yes, 't is the air for a serenade which I have had him compose, while waiting for our gentleman to wake up.

DANCING-MASTER

May I see it?

MUSIC-MASTER

You shall hear it, with the words, when he comes. He won't be long.

DANCING-MASTER

You and I have no lack of occupation now.

MUSIC-MASTER

That 's true. We have found a man here who is just what we both needed. He 's a nice little source of income for us, this Mr. Jourdain, with his visions of nobility and gallantry that he has got into his noddle. And 't would be a fine thing for your capers and my crotchets if everybody were like him.

DANCING-MASTER

No, no, not quite; I could wish, for his sake, that he had some true understanding of the good things we bring him.

MUSIC-MASTER

'T is true he understands them ill, but he

pays them well; and that is what the arts need most nowadays.

DANCING-MASTER

For my part, I 'll own, I must be fed somewhat on fame. I am sensitive to applause, and I feel that in all the fine arts 't is a grievous torture to show one's talents before fools, and to endure the barbarous judgments of a dunce upon our compositions. There 's great pleasure, I tell you, in working for people who are capable of feeling the refinements of art, who know how to give a flattering reception to the beauties of your work, and recompense your toil by titillating praise. Yes, the most agreeable reward possible for what we do, is to see it understood, to see it caressed by applause that honours us. Nothing else, methinks, can pay us so well for all our labours; and enlightened praise gives exquisite delight.

MUSIC-MASTER

I grant you that, and I relish it as you do. There is surely nothing more gratifying than such praise as you speak of; but man cannot live on incense. Mere praise won't buy you an estate; it takes something more solid. And the best way to praise, is to praise with open hands. Our fellow, to be sure, is a man of little wit, who discourses at random about anything and everything, and never applauds but at the wrong time. But his money sets right the errors of his mind; there is judgment in his purse; his praises pass current; and this ignorant shopkeeper is worth more to us, as you very well see, than the enlightened lord who introduced us to his house.

DANCING-MASTER

There is some truth in what you say; but methinks you set too much store by money; and self-interest is something so base, that no gentleman should ever show a leaning towards it.

MUSIC-MASTER

Yet I have n't seen you refuse the money our fellow offers you.

DANCING-MASTER

Certainly not; but neither do I find therein all my happiness; and I could still wish that with his wealth he had good taste to boot.

MUSIC-MASTER

I could wish so too; and 't is to that end that we are both working, as best we may. But in any case, he gives us the means to make ourselves known in the world; he shall pay for others, and others shall praise for him.

DANCING-MASTER

Here he comes.

SCENE II

MR. JOURDAIN, *in dressing-gown and night-cap;* MUSIC-MASTER, DANCING-MASTER, DANCING-MASTER'S SCHOLAR, SINGERS, DANCERS, LACKEYS

MR. JOURDAIN

Well, gentlemen? How is it? Are you going to show me your waggish trifle?

DANCING-MASTER

How? What waggish trifle?

MR. JOURDAIN

Why! You know . . . what d' ye call the thing? Your prologue, or your dialogue in song and dance.

DANCING-MASTER

Oh! oh!

MUSIC-MASTER

You find us ready.

MR. JOURDAIN

I have kept you waiting a little, but 't is because I am to be dressed to-day like people of quality, and my tailor sent me some silk stockings that I thought I should never get on.

MUSIC-MASTER

We are here only to wait upon your leisure.

MR. JOURDAIN

I beg you both not to go till they have brought my clothes, so that you can see me in them.

DANCING-MASTER

Whatever you will.

MR. JOURDAIN

You shall see me properly rigged out, from head to foot.

MUSIC-MASTER

We don't doubt it.

MR. JOURDAIN

I have had this Indian gown made for me.

DANCING-MASTER

'T is very handsome.

MR. JOURDAIN

My tailor tells me that people of quality appear thus in the morning.

MUSIC-MASTER

It becomes you marvellously.

MR. JOURDAIN

Lackeys! Ho, both my lackeys!

FIRST LACKEY

Your pleasure, sir?

MR. JOURDAIN

Nothing. 'T was only to see whether you are attending. (*To the music-master and dancing-master*) What do you say to my liveries?

DANCING-MASTER

They are magnificent.

MR. JOURDAIN, *opening his gown and showing his close-fitting red velvet breeches, and a green velvet jacket*

This is a négligée costume to take my exercise in, in the morning.

MUSIC-MASTER

'T is very genteel.

MR. JOURDAIN

Lackey!

FIRST LACKEY

Sir.

MR. JOURDAIN

T' other lackey!

SECOND LACKEY

Sir.

MR. JOURDAIN, *taking off his dressing-gown*

Hold my gown. (*To the music-master and dancing-master*) Do you like me so?

DANCING-MASTER

Hugely. Nothing could be better.

MR. JOURDAIN

Well, now for your affair.

MUSIC-MASTER

I should like first to have you hear an air which he (*pointing to his scholar*) has just composed for the serenade you requested. He is one of my scholars, and he has an admirable talent for that sort of thing.

MR. JOURDAIN

Yes. But you had no business to get it done by a scholar. You were none too good for the job yourself.

MUSIC-MASTER

Sir, the word scholar must not mislead you. Such

scholars know as much as the greatest master; and the air is as beautiful as anything could possibly be. Only listen to it.

MR. JOURDAIN, *to his lackeys*

Give me my gown, to hear better. . . . Wait, 't will be better without the gown. No, give it back to me; that is the best way.

A SINGER

I languish night and day, and know no end
Of pain, since I've been slave to your fair eyes.
If thus, my love, you use a loving friend,
Alas! what fate befalls your enemies?

MR. JOURDAIN

This song seems rather doleful to me; 't is enough to put anybody to sleep, and I wish you could liven it up a bit here and there.

MUSIC-MASTER

The air, sir, must be suited to the words.

MR. JOURDAIN

I learned one that was really pretty, a little while ago. Wait . . . er . . . how does it go?

DANCING-MASTER

On my word, I don't know.

MR. JOURDAIN

There 's lamb in it.

DANCING-MASTER

Lamb?

MR. JOURDAIN

Yes. Ah! (*He sings:*)

I thought my fair Jenny
As gentle as any;
I thought my fair Jenny
As mild as a lamby.
But alas! but alas!
She 's more cruel by far, she 's more cruel by far,
Than the wild tigers are.

Is n't it pretty?

MUSIC-MASTER

Nothing could be prettier.

DANCING-MASTER

And you sing it well.

MR. JOURDAIN

Yet I 've never learnt music neither.

MUSIC-MASTER

You ought to learn it, sir, as you do dancing. These two arts are intimately bound together.

DANCING-MASTER

And they open a man's eyes to the beauty of things.

MR. JOURDAIN

Do people of quality learn music too?

MUSIC-MASTER

Yes, sir.

MR. JOURDAIN

Then I will learn it. But I don't know where I can find the time; for, besides my fencing-master, I have also hired a philosophy-master, who is to begin this morning.

MUSIC-MASTER

Philosophy is something, to be sure; but music sir, music . . .

DANCING-MASTER

Music and dancing . . . Music and dancing, in short, are all a man needs.

MUSIC-MASTER

There is nothing so serviceable to the State as music.

DANCING-MASTER

There is nothing so necessary to mankind as dancing.

MUSIC-MASTER

Without music no State can survive.

DANCING-MASTER

Without dancing a man can achieve nothing.

MUSIC-MASTER

All disorders, all wars that are seen in the world, come about merely for lack of knowing music.

DANCING-MASTER

All the ills of mankind, all the tragic misfortunes that fill the histories, all political blunders, all the

failures of great commanders, have come merely from lack of skill in dancing.

MR. JOURDAIN

How so?

MUSIC-MASTER

Does not war come from want of unison among men?

MR. JOURDAIN

That is true.

MUSIC-MASTER

If all men learned music, would n't that be the means of bringing them into harmony, and so of obtaining universal peace on earth?

MR. JOURDAIN

You are right.

DANCING-MASTER

When a man has been guilty of a mistake, either in governing his own affairs, or in guiding those of the State, or in commanding an army, do we not always say: Such a one has made a false step in this affair?

MR. JOURDAIN

Yes, that is what we say.

DANCING-MASTER

And can making a false step result from anything but lack of skill in dancing?

MR. JOURDAIN

That is true. You are both right.

DANCING-MASTER

This should show you the excellence and profitableness of dancing and music.

MR. JOURDAIN

Yes, now I understand it.

MUSIC-MASTER

Will you see our two compositions?

MR. JOURDAIN

Yes.

MUSIC-MASTER

As I have told you, 't is a slight attempt I made some time ago upon the different passions music is capable of expressing.

MR. JOURDAIN

Very good.

MUSIC-MASTER, *to the musicians*

Here, come forward. (*To Mr. Jourdain*) You are to imagine that they are dressed as shepherds.

MR. JOURDAIN

Why always shepherds? You never see anything else, anywhere.

DANCING-MASTER

When people are to speak in music, we must, for verisimilitude, adopt the pastoral style. Song has

from all time been appropriated to shepherds; and it is hardly natural that courtiers or townsmen should sing their passions in dialogue.

MR. JOURDAIN

Well, all right. Let 's see the thing.

DIALOGUE IN MUSIC

ONE WOMAN AND TWO MEN

WOMAN

A heart that 's subject to love's tyrant sway,
With untold cares is tortured day by day.
They say it is a joy to faint and sigh,
But, spite of all they say,
There 's nothing half so sweet as liberty.

FIRST MAN

There 's nothing half so sweet as tender love
That sets two hearts on fire
With one desire;
There is no happiness apart from love.
If love be gone,
The joy of life is done.

SECOND MAN

It might be sweet to own the sway of love,
If hearts would constant prove;
But ah! the cruel spite!
No shepherdess is ever faithful quite;
This fickle sex, that shames the light of day,
Will force us to abandon love for aye.

FIRST MAN

O sweet desire,

WOMAN

O freedom dear,

SECOND MAN

O sex untrue,

FIRST MAN

What joy dost thou inspire!

WOMAN

What love to thee I bear!

SECOND MAN

What hatred is thy due!

FIRST MAN

Ah! leave this cruel hate, and yield to love!

WOMAN

And then you yet may prove
One maid can faithful be.

SECOND MAN

Let me this marvel see!

WOMAN

To prove our sex's truth,
My heart I offer you.

SECOND MAN

But, shepherdess, in sooth,
May I believe it true?

WOMAN

Which will the better love,
Come, let us try and see!

SECOND MAN

And may the gods above
Punish inconstancy!

THE THREE TOGETHER

Ah, surely it is meet
To yield love all his due;
For love is passing sweet
If hearts be true!

MR. JOURDAIN

Is that all?

MUSIC-MASTER

Yes.

MR. JOURDAIN

Well, I think it's very neat, and there's some rather pretty little maxims in it.

DANCING-MASTER

And now, for my contribution, here is a little sample of the finest movements and most graceful attitudes possible in dancing.

MR. JOURDAIN

Are they shepherds too?

DANCING-MASTER

What you will. (*To the dancers*) Now, begin.

BALLET

Four dancers execute all the different movements and kinds of steps that the dancing-master bids them ; and this dance forms the first interlude.

ACT II

SCENE I

Mr. Jourdain, Music-Master, Dancing-Master, Lackey

MR. JOURDAIN

That is not at all bad, your people frisk it famously.

MUSIC-MASTER

When dance and music accompany each other, it will produce a still finer effect ; you 'll find something very gallant in the little ballet we have arranged for you.

MR. JOURDAIN

We are to have it this afternoon, mind ; the person for whom I ordered it, is to do me the honour of coming to dine here.

DANCING-MASTER

Everything is ready.

MUSIC-MASTER

But, sir, this is not enough ; a person like you, who lives magnificently and has a taste for beautiful things, should have a concert at his house every Wednesday or Thursday.

MR. JOURDAIN

Is that what people of quality do?

MUSIC-MASTER

Yes, sir.

MR. JOURDAIN

Then I shall. Will it be fine?

MUSIC-MASTER

Certainly. You must have three voices, a soprano, a counter-tenor, and a bass, accompanied by a bass-viol, a theorbo, and a harpsichord for the sustained accompaniment, with two first violins for the variations.

MR. JOURDAIN

You must have a marine trumpet, too. The marine trumpet is an instrument I like, and 't is full of harmony.

MUSIC-MASTER

Leave it all to us.

MR. JOURDAIN

Anyhow, don't forget to send me some musicians presently to sing at table.

MUSIC-MASTER

You shall have everything you should have.

MR. JOURDAIN

But above all, mind you have a fine ballet.

MUSIC-MASTER

You will be pleased with it, and especially with some minuets that you will find in it.

MR. JOURDAIN

Ah ! the minuet is my dance. I must have you see me dance one. Come, teacher.

DANCING-MASTER

A hat, sir, please. (*Mr. Jourdain takes his lackey's hat, and puts it on over his nightcap. The dancing-master takes him by both hands, and sings the air of a minuet for him to dance by.*) La, la, la ; la, la, la, la, la, la ; la, la, la ; (*Bis*). La, la, la ; la, la. Dance in time, will you, please, sir. La, la, la, la, la. Now with the right leg. La, la, la. Move your shoulders somewhat less, sir. La, la, la, la, la ; la, la, la, la, la. Both your arms are stiff as pokers. La, la, la, la, la. Hold your head higher. Turn out the points of your toes, my good sir. La, la, la. Please stand up straight, sir.

MR. JOURDAIN

Well?

MUSIC-MASTER

Nothing could be better.

MR. JOURDAIN

By the way. Teach me how to make a bow to a marquise. I shall need it this afternoon.

DANCING-MASTER

A bow to a marquise?

MR. JOURDAIN

Yes. A marquise whose name is Dorimène.

DANCING-MASTER

Give me your hand.

MR. JOURDAIN

No. You do it; I shall remember it all right.

DANCING-MASTER

If you want to bow to her with great respect, you must first draw your leg behind you and bow, then walk toward her, making three bows forward, and at the last one, bow as low as her knees.

MR. JOURDAIN

Just show me. (*After the dancing-master has made three bows*) That 'll do.

SCENE II

MR. JOURDAIN, MUSIC-MASTER, DANCING-MASTER, LACKEY

LACKEY

Sir, here is your fencing-master.

MR. JOURDAIN

Tell him to come in and give me my lesson here. (*To the music-master and dancing-master*) I want you to see me perform.

SCENE III

MR. JOURDAIN, FENCING-MASTER, MUSIC-MASTER, DANCING-MASTER, A LACKEY *with two foils*

FENCING-MASTER, *taking the two foils from the lackey and giving one of them to Mr. Jourdain*

Now, sir, your salute. The body erect. The weight slightly on the left thigh. The legs not so far apart. The feet in line. The wrist in line with the thigh. The point of your sword in line with your shoulder. The arm not quite so far extended. The left hand on a level with the eye. The left shoulder farther back. Head up. A bold look. Advance. The body steady. Engage my sword in quart and finish the thrust. One, two. Recover. Again, your feet firm. One, two. Retreat. When you thrust, sir, your sword must move first, and your body be held well back, and sideways. One, two. Now, engage my sword in tierce, and finish the thrust. Advance. Your body steady. Advance. Now, from that position. One, two. Recover. Again. One, two. Retreat. On guard, sir, on guard (*the fencing-master gives him several thrusts*), on guard.

MR. JOURDAIN

Well?

MUSIC-MASTER

You do wonders.

FENCING-MASTER

I've told you already: the whole secret of arms consists in two things only: hitting and not being hit. And as I proved to you the other day by demonstrative logic, it is impossible that you should be hit if you know how to turn aside your adversary's sword from the line of your body; and that

depends merely on a slight movement of the wrist, inwards or outwards.

MR. JOURDAIN

So, then, without any courage, one may be sure of killing his man and not being killed?

FENCING-MASTER

Certainly. Did n't you see the demonstration of it?

MR. JOURDAIN

Yes.

FENCING-MASTER

And by this you may see how highly our profession should be esteemed in the State; and how far the science of arms excels all other sciences, that are of no use, like dancing, music . . .

DANCING-MASTER

Softly, Mr. Swordsman; don't speak disrespectfully of dancing.

MUSIC-MASTER

Learn, pray, to appreciate better the excellences of music.

FENCING-MASTER

You are absurd fellows, to think of comparing your sciences with mine.

MUSIC-MASTER

Just see the man of consequence!

DANCING-MASTER

The ridiculous animal, with his padded stomacher!

FENCING-MASTER

My little dancing-master, I will make you dance to a tune of my own, and you, little songster, I will make you sing out lustily.

DANCING-MASTER

Mr. Ironmonger, I 'll teach you your own trade.

MR. JOURDAIN, *to the dancing-master*

Are you mad, to pick a quarrel with him, when he knows tierce and quart, and can kill a man by demonstrative logic?

DANCING-MASTER

A fig for his demonstrative logic, and his tierce and his quart.

MR. JOURDAIN, *to the dancing-master*

Softly, I tell you.

FENCING-MASTER, *to the dancing-master*

What, little Master Impudence!

MR. JOURDAIN

Hey! my dear fencing-master.

DANCING-MASTER, *to the fencing-master*

What, you great cart-horse!

MR. JOURDAIN

Hey! my dear dancing-master.

FENCING-MASTER

If I once fall upon you . . .

MR. JOURDAIN, *to the fencing-master*

Gently.

DANCING-MASTER

If I once lay hands on you . . .

MR. JOURDAIN, *to the dancing-master*

So, so.

FENCING-MASTER

I will give you such a dressing . . .

MR. JOURDAIN, *to the fencing-master*

I beg you.

DANCING-MASTER

I will give you such a drubbing . . .

MR. JOURDAIN, *to the dancing-master*

I beseech you . . .

MUSIC-MASTER

Let us teach him manners a little.

MR. JOURDAIN

Good Heavens! do stop.

SCENE IV

A Professor of Philosophy, Mr. Jourdain, Music-Master, Dancing-Master, Fencing-Master, Lackey

MR. JOURDAIN

Oho! Mr. Philosopher, you 've arrived in the nick of time with your philosophy. Do come and set these people here at peace.

THE PHILOSOPHER

How now? What is the matter, gentlemen?

MR. JOURDAIN

They have put themselves in a passion, about the precedence of their professions, and even insulted each other and almost come to blows.

THE PHILOSOPHER

O fie, gentlemen! Should a man so lose his self-control? Have you not read the learned treatise which Seneca composed, *Of Anger?* Is there anything more base or shameful than this passion, which of a man makes a savage beast? Should not reason be mistress of all our emotions?

DANCING-MASTER

How, how, sir! Here he comes and insults us both, by contemning dancing, which I practise, and music, which is his profession.

THE PHILOSOPHER

A wise man is above all the insults that can be offered him; and the chief answer which we should make to all offences, is calmness and patience.

FENCING-MASTER

They both have the insolence to think of comparing their professions with mine!

THE PHILOSOPHER

Should that move you? 'T is not for vain glory and precedence that men should contend; what really distinguishes us from each other is wisdom and virtue.

DANCING-MASTER

I maintain to his face that dancing is a science which cannot be too highly honoured.

MUSIC-MASTER

And I, that music is a science which all ages have reverenced.

FENCING-MASTER

And I maintain, against both of them, that the science of fencing is the finest and most indispensable of all sciences.

THE PHILOSOPHER

But what then becomes of philosophy? I think you are all three mighty impertinent to speak with such arrogance before me, and impudently to give the name of science to things which ought not even to be honoured with the name of art, and which may best be classed together as pitiful trades, whether of prize-fighters, ballad-mongers, or mountebanks.

FENCING-MASTER

Go to, dog of a philosopher.

MUSIC-MASTER

Go to, beggarly pedagogue.

DANCING-MASTER

Go to, past master pedant.

THE PHILOSOPHER

What, you rascally knaves! . . . (*He falls upon them, and they all three belabour him with blows.*)

MR. JOURDAIN

Mr. Philosopher!

THE PHILOSOPHER

Villains! varlets! insolent vermin!

MR. JOURDAIN

Mr. Philosopher!

FENCING-MASTER

Plague take the beast!

MR. JOURDAIN

Gentlemen!

THE PHILOSOPHER

Brazen-faced ruffians!

MR. JOURDAIN

Mr. Philosopher!

DANCING-MASTER

Deuce take the old pack-mule!

MR. JOURDAIN

Gentlemen!

THE PHILOSOPHER

Scoundrels!

MR. JOURDAIN

Mr. Philosopher!

MUSIC-MASTER

Devil take the impertinent puppy!

MR. JOURDAIN

Gentlemen!

THE PHILOSOPHER

Thieves! vagabonds! rogues! impostors!

MR. JOURDAIN

Mr. Philosopher! Gentlemen! Mr. Philosopher! Gentlemen! Mr. Philosopher! (*Exeunt fighting.*)

SCENE V

MR. JOURDAIN, LACKEY

MR. JOURDAIN

Oh! fight as much as you please; I can't help it, and I won't go spoil my gown trying to part you. I should be mad to thrust myself among them, and get some blow that might do me a mischief.

SCENE VI

THE PHILOSOPHER, MR. JOURDAIN, LACKEY

THE PHILOSOPHER, *straightening his collar*

Now for our lesson.

MR. JOURDAIN

Oh! sir, I am sorry for the blows you got.

THE PHILOSOPHER

That 's nothing. A philosopher knows how to take things aright; and I shall compose a satire against them in Juvenal's manner, which will cut them up properly. But let that pass. What do you want to learn?

MR. JOURDAIN

Everything I can; for I have the greatest desire conceivable to be learned; it throws me in a rage to think that my father and mother did not make me study all the sciences when I was young.

THE PHILOSOPHER

That is a reasonable sentiment; *nam, sine doctrina, vita est quasi mortis imago.* You understand that, for of course you know Latin.

MR. JOURDAIN

Yes; but play that I don't know it; and explain what it means.

THE PHILOSOPHER

It means that, *without learning, life is almost an image of death.*

MR. JOURDAIN

That same Latin 's in the right.

THE PHILOSOPHER

Have you not some foundations, some rudiments of knowledge?

MR. JOURDAIN

Oh! yes, I can read and write.

THE PHILOSOPHER

Where will you please to have us begin? Shall I teach you logic?

MR. JOURDAIN

What may that same logic be?

THE PHILOSOPHER

'T is the science that teaches the three operations of the mind.

MR. JOURDAIN

And who are they, these three operations of the mind?

THE PHILOSOPHER

The first, the second, and the third. The first is to conceive aright, by means of universals; the second, to judge aright, by means of the categories; and the third, to draw deductions aright, by means of the figures: *Barbara*, *Celarent*, *Darii*, *Ferio*, *Baralipton*.

MR. JOURDAIN

There 's a pack of crabbed words. This logic does n't suit me at all. Let 's learn something else that 's prettier.

THE PHILOSOPHER

Will you learn ethics?

MR. JOURDAIN

Ethics?

THE PHILOSOPHER

Yes.

MR. JOURDAIN

What is your ethics about?

THE PHILOSOPHER

It treats of happiness, teaches men to moderate their passions, and . . .

MR. JOURDAIN

No; no more of that. I am choleric as the whole pack of devils, ethics or no ethics; no, sir, I 'll be angry to my heart's content, whenever I have a mind to it.

THE PHILOSOPHER

Is it physics you want to learn?

MR. JOURDAIN

And what has this physics to say for itself?

THE PHILOSOPHER

Physics is the science which explains the principles of natural phenomena, and the properties of bodies; which treats of the nature of the elements, metals, minerals, stones, plants, and animals, and teaches us the causes of all such things as meteors, the rainbow, St. Elmo's fire, comets, lightning, thunder, thunderbolts, rain, snow, hail, winds, and whirlwinds.

MR. JOURDAIN

There's too much jingle-jangle in that, too much hurly-burly.

THE PHILOSOPHER

Then what do you want me to teach you?

MR. JOURDAIN

Teach me spelling.

THE PHILOSOPHER

With all my heart.

MR. JOURDAIN

And afterward, you shall teach me the almanac, so as to know when there 's a moon, and when there is n't.

THE PHILOSOPHER

Very well. To follow up your line of thought logically, and treat this matter in true philosophic fashion, we must begin, according to the proper order of things, by an exact knowledge of the nature of the letters, and the different method of pronouncing each one. And on that head I must tell you that the letters are divided into vowels, so called—*vowels*—because they express the sounds of the *voice* alone; and consonants, so called—*con-sonants*—because they *sound with* the vowels, and only mark the different articulations of the voice. There are five vowels, or voices: A, E, I, O, U.

MR. JOURDAIN

I understand all that.

THE PHILOSOPHER

The vowel A is formed by opening the mouth wide: A.[1]

[1] The vowels must of course be pronounced as in French: approximately, A as in father, E as in they, I as in machine, O as in note; the French U has no equivalent in English, but is like the German ü.

MR. JOURDAIN

A, A. Yes.

THE PHILOSOPHER

The vowel E is formed by lifting the lower jaw nearer to the upper: A, E.

MR. JOURDAIN

A, E; A, E. On my word, 't is so. Ah! how fine!

THE PHILOSOPHER

And the vowel I, by bringing the jaws still nearer together, and stretching the corners of the mouth toward the ears; A, E, I.

MR. JOURDAIN

A, E, I, I, I, I. That is true. Science forever!

THE PHILOSOPHER

The vowel O is formed by opening the jaws, and drawing in the lips at the corners: O.

MR. JOURDAIN

O, O. Nothing could be more correct: A, E, I, O, I, O. 'T is admirable! I, O; I, O.

THE PHILOSOPHER

The opening of the mouth looks exactly like a little circle, representing an O.

MR. JOURDAIN

O, O, O. You are right. O. Ah! What a fine thing it is to know something!

THE PHILOSOPHER

The vowel U is formed by bringing the teeth to-

gether without letting them quite touch, and thrusting out the lips, at the same time bringing them together without quite shutting them: U.

MR. JOURDAIN

U, U. Nothing could be truer: **U.**

THE PHILOSOPHER

Your lips are extended as if you were pouting; therefore if you wish to make a face at anyone, and mock at him, you have only to say U.

MR. JOURDAIN

U, U. 'T is true. Ah! would I had studied sooner, to know all that!

THE PHILOSOPHER

To-morrow, we will consider the other letters, namely the consonants.

MR. JOURDAIN

Are there just as curious things about them as about these?

THE PHILOSOPHER

Certainly. The consonant D, for instance, is pronounced by clapping the tip of the tongue just above the upper teeth: D.

MR. JOURDAIN

D, D. Yes! Oh! what fine things! what fine things!

THE PHILOSOPHER

The F, by resting the upper teeth on the lower lip: F.

MR. JOURDAIN

F, F. 'T is the very truth. Oh! father and mother of me, what a grudge I owe you!

THE PHILOSOPHER

And the R by lifting the tip of the tongue to the roof of the mouth; so that being grazed by the air, which comes out sharply, it yields to it, yet keeps returning to the same point, and so makes a sort of trilling: R, Ra.

MR. JOURDAIN

R, R, Ra, R, R, R, R, R, Ra. That is fine. Oh! what a learned man you are, and how much time I 've lost! R, R, R, Ra.

THE PHILOSOPHER

I will explain all these curious things to you thoroughly.

MR. JOURDAIN

Do, I beg you. But now, I must tell you a great secret. I am in love with a person of very high rank, and I wish you would help me to write her something in a little love-note which I 'll drop at her feet.

THE PHILOSOPHER

Excellent!

MR. JOURDAIN

'T will be very gallant, will it not?

THE PHILOSOPHER

Surely. Do you want to write to her in verse?

MR. JOURDAIN

No, no; none of your verse.

THE PHILOSOPHER

You want mere prose?

MR. JOURDAIN

No, I will have neither prose nor verse.

THE PHILOSOPHER

It must needs be one or the other.

MR. JOURDAIN

Why?

THE PHILOSOPHER

For this reason, that there is nothing but prose or verse to express oneself by.

MR. JOURDAIN

There is nothing but prose or verse?

THE PHILOSOPHER

No, sir. All that is not prose is verse, and all that is not verse is prose.

MR. JOURDAIN

But when we talk, what is that, say?

THE PHILOSOPHER

Prose.

MR. JOURDAIN

What! When I say: "Nicole, bring me my slippers and give me my nightcap," that 's prose?

THE PHILOSOPHER

Yes, sir.

MR. JOURDAIN

On my word, I 've been speaking prose these forty years, and never knew it; I am infinitely obliged to you for having informed me of this. Now I want to write to her in a note: *Fair Marquise, your fair eyes make me die of love;* but I want it to be put in gallant fashion, and neatly turned.

THE PHILOSOPHER

Say that the fires of her eyes reduce your heart to ashes; that night and day you suffer for her all the tortures of a . . .

MR. JOURDAIN

No, no, no, I want none of all that. I will have nothing but what I told you: *Fair Marquise, your fair eyes make me die of love.*

THE PHILOSOPHER

You must enlarge upon the matter a little.

MR. JOURDAIN

No, I tell you. I 'll have none but those very words in the note, but put in a fashionable way, arranged as they should be. Pray tell me over the different ways they can be put, so that I may see.

THE PHILOSOPHER

You can first of all put them as you said: *Fair Marquise, your fair eyes make me die of love.* Or else: *Of love to die me make, fair Marquise, your fair eyes.* Or else: *Your fair eyes of love me make,*

fair Marquise, to die. Or else: *To die your fair eyes, fair Marquise, of love me make.* Or else: *Me make your fair eyes die, fair Marquise, of love.*

MR. JOURDAIN

But which of all these ways is the best?

THE PHILOSOPHER

The way you said it: *Fair Marquise, your fair eyes make me die of love.*

MR. JOURDAIN

And yet I never studied, and I did it at the first try. I thank you with all my heart, and beg you to come again to-morrow early.

THE PHILOSOPHER

I shall not fail to.

SCENE VII

MR. JOURDAIN, LACKEY

MR. JOURDAIN, *to the lackey*

What! Have n't my clothes come yet?

LACKEY

No, sir.

MR. JOURDAIN

That cursed tailor makes me wait a long while, on a day when I 'm so busy. I am furious. May the quartan ague wring this villain of a tailor unmercifully! To the devil with the tailor! Plague choke

the tailor! If I had him here now, that wretch of a tailor, that dog of a tailor, that scoundrel of a tailor, I 'd . . .

SCENE VIII

MR. JOURDAIN, A MASTER-TAILOR; A JOURNEYMAN-TAILOR, *carrying Mr. Jourdain's suit;* LACKEY

MR. JOURDAIN

Ah! so there you are! I was just going to get angry with you.

MASTER-TAILOR

I could not come sooner, I had twenty men at work on your clothes.

MR. JOURDAIN

You sent me some silk stockings so tight that I had dreadful work getting them on, and there are two stitches broke in them already

MASTER-TAILOR

If anything, they will grow only too loose.

MR. JOURDAIN

Yes, if I keep on breaking out stitches. And you made me some shoes that pinch horribly.

MASTER-TAILOR

Not at all, sir.

MR. JOURDAIN

What! Not at all?

MASTER-TAILOR

No, they do not pinch you.

MR. JOURDAIN

I tell you they do pinch me.

MASTER-TAILOR

You imagine it.

MR. JOURDAIN

I imagine it because I feel it. A fine way of talking!

MASTER-TAILOR

There, this is one of the very handsomest and best matched of court costumes. 'T is a masterpiece to have invented a suit that is dignified, yet not of black; and I 'd give the most cultured tailors six trials and defy them to equal it.

MR. JOURDAIN

What 's this? You have put the flowers upside down.

MASTER-TAILOR

You did n't tell me you wanted them right end up.

MR. JOURDAIN

Was there any need to tell you that?

MASTER-TAILOR

Why, of course. All persons of quality wear them this way.

MR. JOURDAIN

Persons of quality wear the flowers upside down?

MASTER-TAILOR

Yes, sir.

MR. JOURDAIN

Oh! that 's all right then.

MASTER-TAILOR

If you wish, I will put them right end up.

MR. JOURDAIN

No, no.

MASTER-TAILOR

You have only to say the word.

MR. JOURDAIN

No, I tell you; you did rightly. Do you think the clothes will fit me?

MASTER-TAILOR

A pretty question! I defy any painter, with his brush, to make you a closer fit. I have in my shop a fellow that is the greatest genius in the world for setting up a pair of German breeches; and another who is the hero of our age for the cut of a doublet.

MR. JOURDAIN

Are the wig and the feathers just as they should be?

MASTER-TAILOR

Everything is just right.

MR. JOURDAIN, *looking at the tailor's suit*

Ah! ah! Mr. Tailor, here is some of the cloth from my last suit you made me. I know it perfectly.

MASTER-TAILOR

The cloth seemed to me so fine that I thought well to cut a suit for myself out of it.

MR. JOURDAIN

Yes; but you ought not to have cabbaged it out of mine.

MASTER-TAILOR

Will you put on your suit?

MR. JOURDAIN

Yes; let me have it.

MASTER-TAILOR

Wait. That is not the way to do things. I have brought my men with me to dress you to music; clothes such as these must be put on with ceremony. Ho! enter, you fellows.

SCENE IX

MR. JOURDAIN, MASTER-TAILOR, JOURNEYMAN-TAILOR; DANCERS, *in the costume of journeymen-tailors;* LACKEY.

MASTER-TAILOR, *to his journeymen*

Put on the gentleman's suit, in the style you use for persons of quality.

FIRST BALLET

Enter four journeymen-tailors, two of whom pull off Mr. Jourdain's breeches that he had on for his exercise, and the other two his jacket; then they put on his new suit; and Mr. Jourdain walks about among them, show-

ing off his suit, to see if it is all right. All this to the accompaniment of full orchestra.

JOURNEYMAN-TAILOR

Noble Sir, please give the tailor's men something to drink.

MR. JOURDAIN

What did you call me?

JOURNEYMAN-TAILOR

Noble Sir.

MR. JOURDAIN

Noble Sir! That is what it is to dress as a person of quality! You may go clothed as a tradesman all your days, and nobody will call you Noble Sir. (*Giving him money*) There, that 's for Noble Sir.

JOURNEYMAN-TAILOR

My Lord, we are greatly obliged to you.

MR. JOURDAIN

My Lord! Oh! oh! My Lord! Wait, friend; My Lord deserves something, 't is no mean word, My Lord! There, there 's what His Lordship gives you.

JOURNEYMAN-TAILOR

My Lord, we will all go and drink Your Grace's health.

MR. JOURDAIN

Your Grace! Oh! oh! oh! wait; don't go. Your Grace, to me! (*Aside*) Faith, if he goes as far as

Your Highness he'll empty my purse. (*Aloud*) There, there 's for Your Grace.

JOURNEYMAN-TAILOR

My Lord, we thank you most humbly for your generosity.

MR. JOURDAIN

He did well to stop. I was just going to give it all to him.

SECOND BALLET

The four journeymen-tailors celebrate Mr. Jourdain's liberality with a dance, which forms the second interlude.

ACT III

SCENE I

Mr. Jourdain, Two Lackeys

MR. JOURDAIN

Follow me, while I take a walk and show my clothes through the town; and by all means take care, both of you, to walk close at my heels, so that everyone may be sure you belong to me.

LACKEY

Yes, sir.

MR. JOURDAIN

Call Nicole here, I want to give her some orders. No, don't move; here she comes.

SCENE II

Mr. Jourdain, Nicole, Two Lackeys

MR. JOURDAIN

Nicole!

NICOLE

Yes, sir?

MR. JOURDAIN

Listen.

NICOLE, *laughing*

He, he, he, he, he.

MR. JOURDAIN

What are you laughing at?

NICOLE

He, he, he, he, he, he.

MR. JOURDAIN

What does the hussy mean?

NICOLE

He, he, he. What a figure you cut! He, he, he.

MR. JOURDAIN

How now?

NICOLE

Oh! oh! my gracious! He, he, he, he, he.

MR. JOURDAIN

What a jade have we here? Are you making sport of me?

NICOLE

No, no, sir; I should be very sorry to do so. He he, he, he, he, he.

MR. JOURDAIN

I 'll give you one on the nose, if you laugh any more.

NICOLE

Sir, I can't help it. He, he, he, he, he, he.

MR. JOURDAIN

Won't you have done?

NICOLE

Sir, I ask your pardon ; but you look so funny, I can't keep from laughing. He, he, he.

MR. JOURDAIN

Just see her insolence!

NICOLE

You 're downright comical like that. He, he.

MR. JOURDAIN

I 'll . . .

NICOLE

Oh, please forgive me. He, he, he, he.

MR. JOURDAIN

Look here, if you laugh again the least bit in the world, I swear I 'll give you the worst cuffing that ever was.

NICOLE

Well! sir, it 's over ; I won't laugh any more.

MR. JOURDAIN

Mind you don't. You must clean up for this afternoon . . .

NICOLE

He, he.

MR. JOURDAIN

Clean up properly . . .

NICOLE

He, he.

MR. JOURDAIN

You must, I say, clean up the great hall and . . .

NICOLE

He, he.

MR. JOURDAIN

What, again?

NICOLE, *tumbling down with laughter*

Oh, sir, beat me if you like, but let me have my laugh out; 't will be better for me so. He, he, he.

MR. JOURDAIN

I 'll go mad!

NICOLE

For goodness sake, sir, I beseech you let me laugh. He, he, he.

MR. JOURDAIN

If I begin to . . .

NICOLE

Si-sir, I shall bu-burst if I can't laugh. He, he, he.

MR. JOURDAIN

Was ever such a hussy seen, to come and laugh impudently in my face, instead of taking my orders?

NICOLE

What do you want me to do, sir?

MR. JOURDAIN

Take care, you slut, to get my house ready for the company that is to come presently.

NICOLE, *picking herself up*

Ah! faith, I 've no desire to laugh any more; all your company makes such a litter in the place that the very word 's enough to put me out of temper.

MR. JOURDAIN

Of course I ought to shut my doors to everyone, to please you?

NICOLE

You ought at least to shut them to certain people.

SCENE III

MRS. JOURDAIN, MR. JOURDAIN, NICOLE, TWO LACKEYS

MRS. JOURDAIN

Aha! Here 's a fresh extravagance! Now look here, husband, what is all this outfit? Have you lost your senses to go and harness yourself up in such a fashion? D' ye want to make yourself a laughing-stock everywhere?

MR. JOURDAIN

None but fools, wife, will laugh at me.

MRS. JOURDAIN

Marry will they, and they have n't waited till now neither; long enough already your doings have made everybody laugh.

MR. JOURDAIN

Now who is that everybody, if you please ?

MRS. JOURDAIN

That everybody is a body that is in the right, and has more sense than you have. For my part, I 'm scandalised at the life you lead. I don't know what to call our house any more. Anybody would say it is carnival here every day; from the first thing in the morning, for fear you should lose a minute, there 's nothing but caterwauling of fiddlers and singers, that disturbs the whole neighbourhood.

NICOLE

Madam says true. I can never get the house to rights, with all this gang of folks that you bring in. Their feet ransack every quarter of the town for mud to bring in here; and our poor Françoise is almost worn out with scrubbing the floors your pretty masters daub as regularly as the day comes round.

MR. JOURDAIN

Hoity-toity, maid Nicole! you have a mighty quick tongue for a peasant wench !

MRS. JOURDAIN

Nicole is right; she has more sense than you have. I 'd like to know what use you have for a dancing-master, at your time of life.

NICOLE

And for a great gawk of a fencing-master, who comes stamping round and shaking the whole house down, and tears up all the tiles in the floor.

MR. JOURDAIN

Silence, you, servant, and you, wife.

MRS. JOURDAIN

Do you want to learn to dance, against the time you 'll have no more legs?

NICOLE

Do you want to murder somebody?

MR. JOURDAIN

Silence, I say; you are both ignoramuses. You don't know the prerogatives of all this.

MRS. JOURDAIN

You 'd do much better to think of getting your daughter married, now that she 's of an age to be established in life.

MR. JOURDAIN

I shall think of marrying my daughter when there appears a fit match for her, but in the meantime I shall think of learning fine things.

NICOLE

What 's more, madam, I 've heard that to-day, to make the mess worse, he 's got him a philosopher.

MR. JOURDAIN

In good deed I have. I mean to have learning, and know how to talk upon various subjects in polite society.

MRS. JOURDAIN

Won't you go to school one of these days, and get a flogging, at your age?

MR. JOURDAIN

Why not? Would to God I were flogged presently, and before everyone, could I but know the things they learn at school!

NICOLE

Yes, faith, that would mightily help the shape of your legs.

MR. JOURDAIN

Yes indeed.

MRS. JOURDAIN

All that is mighty needful for the management of your house.

MR. JOURDAIN

Certainly it is. You both talk like idiots, and I am ashamed of your ignorance. (*To Mrs. Jourdain*) Now do you know, for instance, what you are speaking at this moment?

MRS. JOURDAIN

Yes, I know that what I am speaking is mighty well spoken, and that you ought to change your ways.

MR. JOURDAIN

I don't mean that. I 'm asking you what the words are that you are speaking now?

MRS. JOURDAIN

They 're mighty sensible, and that 's more than can be said of your conduct.

MR. JOURDAIN

I don't mean that, I tell you. I 'm asking you

what this is that I 'm speaking to you, that I 'm saying to you now?

MRS. JOURDAIN

'T is stuff and nonsense.

MR. JOURDAIN

No, no, it is not that. What are both of us saying, the language we are using at this moment?

MRS. JOURDAIN

Well?

MR. JOURDAIN

What is it called?

MRS. JOURDAIN

It is called whatever you please to call it.

MR. JOURDAIN

It is prose, ignoramus.

MRS. JOURDAIN

Prose?

MR. JOURDAIN

Yes, prose. All that is prose is not verse; and all that is not verse is not prose. There! see what it is to study. (*To Nicole*) Now you, do you know what you must do to say U?

NICOLE

How?

MR. JOURDAIN

Yes. What do you do when you say U?

NICOLE

What?

MR. JOURDAIN

Just say U, to see.

NICOLE

Well! U.

MR. JOURDAIN

What did you do?

NICOLE

I said U.

MR. JOURDAIN

Yes; but when you said U, what did you do?

NICOLE

I did as you bid me.

MR. JOURDAIN

Oh! what a thing it is to have to deal with dunces! You thrust out your lips, and let the under jaw fall to meet the upper: U, d' ye see? U, I make a face: U.

NICOLE

Yes, 't is fine.

MRS. JOURDAIN

Quite wonderful.

MR. JOURDAIN

'T is still finer if you had only seen O, and D, D, and F, F.

MRS. JOURDAIN

What 's all this rigmarole?

NICOLE

What does it all cure you of?

MR. JOURDAIN

It makes me furious to see such ignorant females.

MRS. JOURDAIN

Go to, you ought to send all those folks packing, with their fol-de-rols.

NICOLE

Especially that great scraggy lout of a fencing-master, who fills my whole house with dust.

MR. JOURDAIN

Hoity-toity, that fencing-master sticks in your crop! I 'll show you your foolishness presently. (*He orders the foils to be brought, and gives one to Nicole.*) There, now for demonstrative proof. The line of the body. When anyone thrusts at you in quart you have only to do this, and when one thrusts at you in tierce, you have only to do this. That 's the sure way never to be killed; and is n't it a fine thing to know what to trust to when you have to fight anyone? Now, thrust at me a little, to see.

NICOLE

Well then! Now. (*Nicole gives him several thrusts.*)

MR. JOURDAIN

Softly! Ho! Hold! Oh! gently. Deuce take the minx!

NICOLE

You tell me to thrust.

MR. JOURDAIN

Yes; but you thrust at me in tierce before you thrust in quart, and you don't have patience to wait till I parry.

MRS. JOURDAIN

You 're out of your mind, husband, with all your fads; it has all come upon you since you 've taken it into your head to keep company with the nobility.

MR. JOURDAIN

In keeping company with the nobility I show my judgment; 't is much better than herding with your vulgar sort.

MRS. JOURDAIN

Yes, my faith and troth! there is much to be gained by going with your nobility, and you 've made great work on 't with this fine gentleman the Count, whom you 're so bewitched with!

MR. JOURDAIN

Silence; take care what you say. Do you know, wife, that you don't know of whom you 're speaking, when you speak of him? He is a person of more importance than you think, a great lord who is respected at court, and who speaks to the king just for all the world as I 'm talking to you now. Is n't it a thing that does me huge honour, to have a person of his quality come to see me so often, and call me his dear friend, and treat me as if I were his equal? He has such kindness for me as you 'd never guess;

and he embraces me before people so much that I am confounded at it myself.

MRS. JOURDAIN

Yes, he 's mighty kind and caressing with you; but he borrows your money.

MR. JOURDAIN

Well! is n't it an honour to me, to lend money to a man of his rank? And could I do less for a lord who calls me his dear friend?

MRS. JOURDAIN

And what does this lord do for you?

MR. JOURDAIN

Things that would astonish you, if you did but know them.

MRS. JOURDAIN

Well, what?

MR. JOURDAIN

Enough! I cannot explain myself. 'T is sufficient that if I have lent him money, he will pay it back exactly, and that before long.

MRS. JOURDAIN

Yes. Just you wait till he does.

MR. JOURDAIN

Certainly. Did n't he say he would?

MRS. JOURDAIN

Yes, yes, you can trust him—not to.

MR. JOURDAIN

He swore to me on his honour as a gentleman.

MRS. JOURDAIN

Rubbish!

MR. JOURDAIN

Heyday! you are hugely obstinate, wife! I tell you he will keep his word to me; I am sure of it.

MRS. JOURDAIN

And I am sure he won't; and all the caresses he loads you with are only to wheedle you.

MR. JOURDAIN

Hold your tongue. Here he comes.

MRS. JOURDAIN

That is the last straw. Perhaps he 's coming to borrow some more of you. The very sight of him takes away my appetite.

MR. JOURDAIN

Hold your tongue, I tell you.

SCENE IV

DORANTE, MR. JOURDAIN, MRS. JOURDAIN, NICOLE

DORANTE

My dear friend, Mr. Jourdain, how are you to-day?

MR. JOURDAIN

Very well, sir, and humbly at your service.

DORANTE

And Mrs. Jourdain there, how does she do?

MRS. JOURDAIN

Mrs. Jourdain does as well as she can.

DORANTE

Why! Mr. Jourdain, you 're dressed most genteelly.

MR. JOURDAIN

As you see.

DORANTE

You make a fine figure in that suit! There 's never a young fellow at court that is better set up than you are.

MR. JOURDAIN

Eh, eh!

MRS. JOURDAIN, *aside*

He scratches him where it itches.

DORANTE

Turn round. 'T is altogether elegant.

MRS. JOURDAIN, *aside*

Yes, as much fool behind as before.

DORANTE

'Pon honour, Mr. Jourdain, I was in a great impatience to see you. You are the man I esteem most in all the world; and I was speaking of you again, this morning, in the King's bed-chamber.

MR. JOURDAIN

You do me much honour, sir. (*To Mrs. Jourdain*) In the King's bed-chamber!

DORANTE

Come, put your hat on.

MR. JOURDAIN

Sir, I know the respect I owe to you.

DORANTE

Bless me, put it on. No ceremony between us, I beseech you.

MR. JOURDAIN

Sir . . .

DORANTE

Put it on, I tell you, Mr. Jourdain; you are my friend.

MR. JOURDAIN

Sir, I am your humble servant.

DORANTE

I will not be covered unless you are.

MR. JOURDAIN, *putting on his hat*

I 'll rather be unmannerly than troublesome.

DORANTE

I am your debtor, as you know.

MRS. JOURDAIN, *aside*

Yes; we know it only too well.

DORANTE

You have generously lent me money on several occasions, and have done me that service with the best grace in the world, I must say.

MR. JOURDAIN

Oh! sir.

DORANTE

But I know how to repay what is lent me, and show my gratitude for the favours done me.

MR. JOURDAIN

I do not doubt it, sir.

DORANTE

I want to settle with you, and have come now to make up our accounts together.

MR. JOURDAIN, *aside to Mrs. Jourdain*

There, wife! you see how wrong you were.

DORANTE

I like to get out of debt as soon as I can.

MR. JOURDAIN, *aside to Mrs. Jourdain*

I told you so.

DORANTE

Let us see how much I owe you.

MR. JOURDAIN, *aside to Mrs. Jourdain*

Now where are you, with your absurd suspicions?

DORANTE

Do you remember exactly all the money you have lent me?

MR. JOURDAIN

I think so. I have made a little memorandum of it. Here it is. Given to you at one time, two hundred louis.

DORANTE

True.

MR. JOURDAIN

Another time, six score.

DORANTE

Just so.

MR. JOURDAIN

And another time, one hundred and forty.

DORANTE

Right.

MR. JOURDAIN

These three items make four hundred and sixty louis, which come to five thousand and sixty francs.

DORANTE

The reckoning is exact. Five thousand and sixty francs.

MR. JOURDAIN

One thousand eight hundred and thirty-two francs to your feather-merchant.

DORANTE

Precisely.

MR. JOURDAIN

Two thousand seven hundred and eighty francs to your tailor.

DORANTE

Right again.

MR. JOURDAIN

Four thousand three hundred and seventy-nine francs, twelve sous, and eight deniers to your draper.

DORANTE

Excellent. Twelve sous and eight deniers; the account is exact.

MR. JOURDAIN

And one thousand seven hundred and forty-eight francs, seven sous, and four deniers to your saddler.

DORANTE

Everything is correct. How much does it all make?

MR. JOURDAIN

Sum total, fifteen thousand eight hundred francs.

DORANTE

Sum total, right. Fifteen thousand eight hundred francs. Now add two hundred pistoles more which you will give me: that will make exactly eighteen thousand francs, which I will pay you at the earliest opportunity.

MRS. JOURDAIN, *aside to Mr. Jourdain*

Well! did n't I guess right?

MR. JOURDAIN, *aside to Mrs. Jourdain*

Silence.

DORANTE

Will it inconvenience you, to give me the sum in question?

MR. JOURDAIN

Oh! no.

MRS. JOURDAIN, *aside to Mr. Jourdain*

The fellow takes you for a milch cow.

MR. JOURDAIN, *aside to Mrs. Jourdain*

Hold your tongue.

DORANTE

If it incommodes you, I will go seek it elsewhere.

MR. JOURDAIN

No, sir.

MRS. JOURDAIN, *aside to Mr. Jourdain*

He will not be satisfied till he has ruined you.

MR. JOURDAIN, *aside to Mrs. Jourdain*

Hold your tongue, I tell you.

DORANTE

If it puts you out, you need only say so.

MR. JOURDAIN

By no means, sir.

MRS. JOURDAIN, *aside to Mr. Jourdain*

He 's a regular swindler.

MR. JOURDAIN, *aside to Mrs. Jourdain*

Be still, will you!

MRS. JOURDAIN, *aside to Mr. Jourdain*

He 'll drain you to the last penny.

MR. JOURDAIN, *aside to Mrs. Jourdain*

Will you be still?

DORANTE

There are many people who would gladly lend it to me, but since you are my best friend, I thought I should be wronging you if I asked anyone else for it.

MR. JOURDAIN

You do me too much honour, sir. I will go fetch it for you.

MRS. JOURDAIN, *aside to Mr. Jourdain*

What! You are going to let him have that too?

MR. JOURDAIN, *aside to Mrs. Jourdain*

What can I do? Would you have me refuse a man of his rank, who spoke of me this morning in the King's bed-chamber?

MRS. JOURDAIN, *aside to Mr. Jourdain*

Go to, you are a downright dupe.

SCENE V

DORANTE, MRS. JOURDAIN, NICOLE

DORANTE

You seem quite pensive. What is the matter, Mrs. Jourdain?

MRS. JOURDAIN

I 've a head that 's bigger than a fist, and it 's not swollen, either.

DORANTE

And where is your daughter, that I have n't seen her?

MRS. JOURDAIN

My daughter is all right where she is.

DORANTE

How does she get on?

MRS. JOURDAIN

On her two legs.

DORANTE

Will you not some day bring her to see the ballet and the play that are given at the King's?

MRS. JOURDAIN

Yes, faith! We have a great fancy for laughing, a great fancy for laughing have we.

DORANTE

I think, Mrs. Jourdain, you must have had many lovers when you were young, being so handsome and sweet-tempered.

MRS. JOURDAIN

By 'r Lady, sir! Is Mrs. Jourdain decrepit, and does her head wag already?

DORANTE

Oh, 'pon honour, Mrs. Jourdain, I beg your par-

don! I forgot that you are young now. I am so often absent-minded. I beg you to excuse my impertinence.

SCENE VI

MR. JOURDAIN, MRS. JOURDAIN, DORANTE, NICOLE

MR. JOURDAIN, *to Dorante*

Here are two hundred louis in good cash.

DORANTE

I assure you, Mr. Jourdain, that I am yours with all my heart, and I long to do you some service at court.

MR. JOURDAIN

I am exceedingly obliged to you.

DORANTE

If Mrs. Jourdain would like to see the royal diversions, I will get her the best seats in the ball-room.

MRS. JOURDAIN

Mrs. Jourdain is your humble servant.

DORANTE, *aside to Mr. Jourdain*

Our fair Marquise, as I told you in my letter, will come here presently for the ballet and collation; I have at last persuaded her to accept the treat you wish to give her.

MR. JOURDAIN

Let us go a little farther off, for good reason.

DORANTE

'T is a week since I saw you; and I have sent you no news of the diamond you put in my hands to give her in your name; that is because I had the greatest difficulty in overcoming her scruples; and it was not till to-day that she could be brought to accept it.

MR. JOURDAIN

How did she like it?

DORANTE

Marvellous well; and unless I am much mistaken, the beauty of this diamond will do wonders with her in your favour.

MR. JOURDAIN

Heaven grant it!

MRS. JOURDAIN, *to Nicole*

Once he is with him, he can never leave him.

DORANTE

I cried up properly to her the richness of your present, and the violence of your love.

MR. JOURDAIN

This, sir, is kindness that quite overwhelms me; I am in the greatest confusion, to see a person of your quality lower himself for my sake to such things as you do.

DORANTE

You don't mean it. Does one ever stop at such scruples, between friends? Would you not do as much for me, if the occasion offered?

MR. JOURDAIN

Oh, surely, and with all my heart.

MRS. JOURDAIN, *to Nicole*

How his presence weighs upon me!

DORANTE

For my part, I stick at nothing when a friend is to be served; so, as soon as you confided to me the passion you had conceived for this charming Marquise, with whom I was intimate, you saw how I offered at once, and of my own accord, to serve your love.

MR. JOURDAIN

True. Such kindness fills me with confusion.

MRS. JOURDAIN, *to Nicole*

Will he never be gone?

NICOLE

They seem very thick together.

DORANTE

You have gone the right way about it to touch her heart. Women love above all things the expense we are at on their account; your frequent serenades, your bouquets sent every day, the magnificent display of fireworks which she found prepared for her on the water, the diamond she received from you, and the entertainment you are now arranging for her, all speak in favour of your love better than any words you could have said to her yourself.

MR. JOURDAIN

There is no expense I would not go to, if thereby

I might find the way to her heart. A woman of quality has entrancing charms for me; 't is an honour I would buy at any cost.

MRS. JOURDAIN, *aside to Nicole*

What can they have to talk about so much? Just go up quietly and listen.

DORANTE

You shall presently enjoy at your ease the pleasure of seeing her; and your eyes shall have full time to feast themselves.

MR. JOURDAIN

To be fully at liberty, I have arranged to have my wife go and dine at my sister's, and spend all the afternoon there.

DORANTE

You did wisely, for your wife might have been in the way. I have given the necessary orders for you to the cook, and for everything that is needful in the ballet. It is my own invention, and if the execution is adequate to the conception, I am sure it will be thought . . .

MR. JOURDAIN, *seeing that Nicole is listening, and giving her a cuff*

Odso! you 're mighty impertinent. (*To Dorante*) Let us go out, if you please.

SCENE VII

MRS. JOURDAIN, NICOLE

NICOLE

Faith, ma'am, my curiosity has cost me some-

thing, but I think there 's mischief afoot; they 're talking about some affair they don't want you to be at.

MRS. JOURDAIN

This is not the first time, Nicole, that I have had suspicions of my husband. Either I 'm much mistaken, or there 's some love-affair in the wind; I am doing my best to discover what it can be. But let's think of my daughter. You know Cléonte's love for her; he is a man after my own heart; and I mean to favour his suit, and let him have Lucile, if I can.

NICOLE

Troth, ma'am, I am mightily charmed to find you in this way of thinking; for if the master hits your fancy, the man pleases mine no less, and I could wish our marriage might be made under the shadow of theirs.

MRS. JOURDAIN

Go and speak to him of it, from me, and tell him to come and see me presently, so that we may join in asking my husband for his daughter's hand.

NICOLE

I fly with joy, ma'am; I could n't have a pleasanter errand. (*Alone*) Methinks I shall make some people mighty happy.

SCENE VIII

CLEONTE, COVIELLE, NICOLE

NICOLE, *to Cléonte*

Ah! here you are in the nick o' time! I am an ambassadress of joy, and have come to . . .

CLEONTE

Begone, perfidious girl, and don't come wasting my time with treacherous words.

NICOLE

Is that the way you receive . . .

CLEONTE

Begone, I say; go this instant and tell your false mistress she shall never more deceive the too credulous Cléonte.

NICOLE

What crazy whim is this? My dear Covielle, do tell me what it means.

COVIELLE

Your dear Covielle, minx! Go, quick, out of my sight, hussy, and let me alone.

NICOLE

What! do you too . . .?

COVIELLE

Out of my sight, I say, and never speak to me again as long as you live.

NICOLE, *aside*

Hoity-toity! what a flea's in both their ears? I 'll go tell my mistress of these fine doings.

SCENE IX

CLEONTE, COVIELLE

CLEONTE

What! treat a lover in such fashion, and that lover the most constant and passionate of lovers!

COVIELLE

'T is a horrid trick they have served us both.

CLEONTE

I show a young woman all the ardour and tenderness that can be imagined; I love nothing but her in all the world, and think of naught but her; she is my only care, my only hope, my only joy; I speak but of her, I think but of her, I dream but of her, for her alone I live and breathe; and such, now, is the fit reward of all my devotion! I live without seeing her for two whole days, that seem to me two frightful centuries; then fortune lets me meet her; my heart, at the sight, feels all elated, my joy shines in my face, I fly to her in ecstasy, and the traitress turns away her eyes, and passes brusquely by, as if in all her life she 'd never seen me!

COVIELLE

I say the same as you.

CLEONTE

Was anything ever known, Covielle, like the perfidy of the ungrateful Lucile?

COVIELLE

Or like that, sir, of the jade Nicole?

CLEONTE

After all the ardent sacrifices, all the sighs and vows, that I have laid upon the altar of her charms!

COVIELLE

After all the attentions, all the cares and services, that I have rendered her in her kitchen!

CLEONTE

All the tears I have poured at her feet!

COVIELLE

All the buckets of water I have drawn for her at the well!

CLEONTE

All the warmth I have shown in cherishing her more than myself!

COVIELLE

All the heat I have borne in turning the spit in her stead!

CLEONTE

She avoids me with disdain!

COVIELLE

She turns her back on me with impudence!

CLEONTE

'T is perfidy that is worthy of the utmost punishment.

COVIELLE

'T is treason that deserves a thousand cuffs.

CLEONTE

Pray never think of speaking in her favour.

COVIELLE

What, I, sir? Heaven forbid!

CLEONTE

Do not, ah! do not palliate the conduct of this traitress.

COVIELLE

Never fear.

CLEONTE

No, don't you understand, all you can say in her defence will be quite useless.

COVIELLE

Who dreams of such a thing?

CLEONTE

I mean to cherish my resentment, and break off all intercourse.

COVIELLE

I give my consent.

CLEONTE

This same Count who haunts the house has perhaps caught her fancy; I can well see she 's dazzled by the quality. I must, for my own honour, forestall the triumph of her faithlessness. I am determined to make as much haste as she toward the change I find she 's seeking, and not to leave her all the credit of abandoning me.

COVIELLE

'T is bravely spoken, and I share all your feelings.

CLEONTE

Yes, second my resentment, and support my resolution against whatever lingering love might yet plead with me for her. Say of her, I entreat you, all the ill you can. Draw me a portrait of her that shall make her despicable to me, and to disgust me with her insist on all the defects you can find in her.

COVIELLE

In her? Ho! a fine affected minx, a pretty little squeamish beauty, to make you so enamoured of her! I see in her nothing but what 's most indifferent; and you can find a hundred fair ones more worthy of you. In the first place, she has small eyes.

CLEONTE

'T is true her eyes are small, but they are full of fire, they are the most sparkling, the most piercing, the most sympathetic eyes ever seen.

COVIELLE

Her mouth is large.

CLEONTE

Yes; but it has a grace in it not to be found in other mouths; the very sight of it rouses desire, 't is the most winning, the loveliest in the world.

COVIELLE

As for her figure, she 's little.

CLEONTE

Yes; but she 's graceful and well proportioned.

COVIELLE

She affects a certain indifference in her speech and manner.

CLEONTE

True; but she has such a grace in it all, and her ways are so engaging, with an indescribable charm that wins its way to people's hearts.

COVIELLE

As to wit . . .

CLEONTE

Ah! that she has, Covielle, and the subtlest and most delicate.

COVIELLE

Her conversation . . .

CLEONTE

Her conversation is charming.

COVIELLE

She is always grave.

CLEONTE

Would you have boisterous gaiety, and ever-bubbling merriment? Is there anything more foolish than those women that are always giggling?

COVIELLE

But anyhow, she 's as capricious as can be.

CLEONTE

Yes, she 's capricious, that I grant you; but everything is becoming in a pretty woman; we bear with everything from the sex.

COVIELLE

Since that is the way of it, I see plainly that you mean to love her still.

CLEONTE

I? I had rather die; I shall hate her as much as once I loved.

COVIELLE

How can you, if you think her so perfect?

CLEONTE

Thereby shall my vengeance be all the more signal, thereby shall I better show the strength of my resolution, in hating and abandoning her, so fair, so full of charm, so lovely as she is. Here she comes.

SCENE X

LUCILE, CLEONTE, COVIELLE, NICOLE

NICOLE, *to Lucile*

For my part, I was altogether scandalised at it.

LUCILE

It can be nothing else but what I told you, Nicole. But there he is.

CLEONTE, *to Covielle*

I will not so much as speak to her.

COVIELLE

I will follow your example.

LUCILE

What is it, Cléonte? What is the matter?

NICOLE

What ails you, Covielle?

LUCILE

What anger possesses you?

NICOLE

What tantrum has seized you now?

LUCILE

Are you dumb, Cléonte?

NICOLE

Have you lost your tongue, Covielle?

CLEONTE

How abandoned!

COVIELLE

What a Judas!

LUCILE

I see plainly that our meeting this morning has displeased you.

CLEONTE, *to Covielle*

Oh! oh! She sees what she has done.

NICOLE

Our reception this morning has put you in a huff.

COVIELLE, *to Cléonte*

They 've guessed where the shoe pinches.

LUCILE

Is 't not so, Cléonte? Is not that the reason of your vexation?

CLEONTE

Yes, traitress, that it is, since I must speak; and I can tell you that you shall not triumph, as you think, in your faithlessness; for I shall be beforehand in breaking with you, and you shall not have the credit of discarding me. I shall find it hard, no doubt, to overcome my love for you; it will give me pain, I shall suffer for a while; but I shall compass it, and will rather thrust a dagger through my heart than be so weak as to come back to you.

COVIELLE, *to Nicole*

As he, so me.

LUCILE

Here 's much ado about nothing. I 'll tell you, Cléonte, what made me avoid you this morning.

CLEONTE, *starting away to avoid Lucile*

No, I won't listen to anything.

NICOLE, *to Covielle*

I 'll let you know the cause of our passing you by so quickly.

COVIELLE, *starting away to avoid Nicole*

I won't hear a word.

LUCILE, *following Cléonte*

This morning, you see . . .

CLEONTE, *walking about without heeding Lucile*

No, I say.

NICOLE, *following Covielle*

Let me tell you . . .

COVIELLE, *walking about without heeding Nicole*

No, you jilt!

LUCILE

Listen.

CLEONTE

No use.

NICOLE

Hark to me.

COVIELLE

I 'm deaf.

LUCILE

Cléonte!

CLEONTE

No.

NICOLE

Covielle!

COVIELLE

Never.

LUCILE

Wait.

CLEONTE

Nonsense.

NICOLE

Hear me.

COVIELLE

Stuff.

LUCILE

Just for a moment.

CLEONTE

Not for anything.

NICOLE

Wait a bit.

COVIELLE

Fiddlesticks.

LUCILE

Just a word or two.

CLEONTE

No. All is over between us.

NICOLE

Just one word.

COVIELLE

I 'll have no more to do with you.

LUCILE, *stopping*

Well! since you won't listen to me, go on and do as you please.

NICOLE, *stopping also*

Since that 's the way with you, take it as you will.

CLEONTE, *turning toward Lucile*

Well then, let us hear the reason of our fine reception.

LUCILE, *turning away to avoid Cléonte*

I don't care, now, to tell you.

COVIELLE, *turning toward Nicole*

Tell us about the business, then.

NICOLE, *walking away to avoid Covielle*

I don't choose to, not I.

CLEONTE, *following Lucile*

Tell me . . .

LUCILE, *still walking away without heeding Cléonte*

No, I won't tell you anything.

COVIELLE, *following Nicole*

Let us hear the story.

NICOLE, *still walking away without heeding Covielle*
No, you 'll hear no story from me.

CLEONTE

I beg you !

LUCILE

No, I say.

COVIELLE

For pity's sake.

NICOLE

No use.

CLEONTE

I beseech you.

LUCILE

Let me be.

COVIELLE

I entreat you.

NICOLE

Away with you.

CLEONTE

Lucile !

LUCILE

No.

COVIELLE

Nicole !

NICOLE

Never.

CLEONTE

In Heaven's name!

LUCILE

I will not.

COVIELLE

Speak to me.

NICOLE

Not for anything.

CLEONTE

Clear up my doubts.

LUCILE

No, I will do nothing of the sort.

COVIELLE

Cure my pain.

NICOLE

No, I don't care to.

CLEONTE

Well! since you are so little concerned to ease me of my suffering and justify yourself for the unworthy manner in which you have treated my love, this is the last time, ungrateful girl, that you shall ever see me; I shall go far away from you, to die of grief and love.

COVIELLE, *to Nicole*

And I shall follow in his footsteps.

LUCILE, *to Cléonte as he is going*

Cléonte!

NICOLE, *to Covielle, as he is going*

Covielle!

CLEONTE, *stopping*

Eh?

COVIELLE, *stopping too*

What say?

LUCILE

Where are you going?

CLEONTE

Where I told you.

COVIELLE

We are going to die.

LUCILE

You are going to die, Cléonte?

CLEONTE

Yes, cruel one, since you will have it so.

LUCILE

I! I will have you die?

CLEONTE

Yes, you will it.

LUCILE

Who tells you that?

CLEONTE, *going nearer to Lucile*

Do you not will it, when you refuse to clear up my suspicions?

LUCILE

Is that my fault? If you had been willing to listen to me, should I not have told you that the affair you resent was caused by the presence this morning of an old aunt, who insists that the mere approach of a man dishonours a girl, and is forever preaching at us on this text, and representing all men as so many devils that we must flee from?

NICOLE, *to Covielle*

That is the whole secret.

CLEONTE

Are you not deceiving me, Lucile?

COVIELLE, *to Nicole*

Are n't you putting a trick on me?

LUCILE, *to Cléonte*

Nothing could be truer.

NICOLE, *to Covielle*

That is just how it is.

COVIELLE, *to Cléonte*

Shall we give in to this?

CLEONTE

Ah! Lucile, how you can with one word bring back peace to my heart; how easily we let ourselves be persuaded by those we love.

COVIELLE

How easily we are wheedled by these little devils.

SCENE XI

MRS. JOURDAIN, CLEONTE, LUCILE, COVIELLE, NICOLE

MRS. JOURDAIN

I am very glad to see you, Cléonte; you are here in the nick of time. My husband is coming; seize this chance to ask him for Lucile.

CLEONTE

Ah! madam, how dear are your words, how they flatter my desires! Could I receive a command more charming, a favour more precious?

SCENE XII

CLEONTE, MR. JOURDAIN, MRS. JOURDAIN, LUCILE, COVIELLE, NICOLE

CLEONTE

Sir, I would let no one speak for me, to make of you a request that I have long had in my thoughts. It concerns me so closely that I must do it myself, and without further circumlocution I will inform you that the honour of being your son-in-law is a proud favour which I beg you to grant me.

MR. JOURDAIN

Before giving you your answer, sir, I beg you to tell me whether you are a gentleman.

CLEONTE

Sir, on this point most people would not hesitate long; the word is easily spoken. People have no scruple about assuming the title, and common custom nowadays seems to authorise the theft. But I must own that I feel somewhat more delicately upon

this subject. I think any imposture is unworthy of a true man, and there is a baseness in disguising that birth which Heaven chose for us, in tricking oneself out before the world in a stolen title, and trying to pass for what one is not. My forbears did indeed hold honourable employments; I have won for myself the honour of six years' service under arms; and I am rich enough to keep up a fair rank in society; but for all that I do not choose to give myself a name which others in my place might think they could lay claim to, and I will tell you frankly that I am not of gentle birth.

MR. JOURDAIN

Your hand on it, sir; my daughter is not for you.

CLEONTE

What?

MR. JOURDAIN

You are not a gentleman born, you shall not have my daughter.

MRS. JOURDAIN

What d' ye mean with your gentleman born? Are we of the rib of St. Louis ourselves?

MR. JOURDAIN

Hold your tongue, wife; I see what you 're coming at.

MRS. JOURDAIN

Did either of us come of any but honest tradesmen?

MR. JOURDAIN

Just listen to her, will you!

MRS. JOURDAIN

And was n't your father a shopkeeper as well as mine?

MR. JOURDAIN

Plague take the woman! she always does it. If your father was a shopkeeper, so much the worse for him; but as for mine, they 're malaperts who say so. All I have to say to you, is that I mean to have a gentleman for son-in-law.

MRS. JOURDAIN

Your daughter should have a husband that is a proper match for her; and she 'd be better off with a good honest fellow, rich and handsome, than with a beggarly broken-down nobleman.

NICOLE

That 's so; there 's the Squire's son in our village, who 's the greatest lout and the silliest noodle I ever set eyes on.

MR. JOURDAIN, *to Nicole*

Hold your prate, Mistress Impertinence. You 're always thrusting yourself into the conversation. I have riches enough for my daughter; all I need is honours, so I shall make her a marquise.

MRS. JOURDAIN

A marquise?

MR. JOURDAIN

Yes, a marquise.

MRS. JOURDAIN

Ah! Heaven save us from that!

MR. JOURDAIN

'T is a thing I am resolved on.

MRS. JOURDAIN

'T is a thing to which I shall never consent. Your marriages with people above you are always subject to wretched vexations. I don't want my daughter to have a husband that can reproach her with her parents, and children that will be ashamed to call me grandma. If she should come to call on me in her fine lady's equipage, and fail by chance to bow to any of the neighbours, they would be sure to say a hundred ill-natured things. "D'ye see," they 'd say, "this marquise that gives herself such airs? She's the daughter of Mr. Jourdain, and she was only too happy, when she was little, to play at My Lady with us. She has n't always been so high and mighty as all that, and her grandfathers were both drapers beside St. Innocent's Gate. They piled up a good fortune for their children, which they 're paying mighty dear for now, may be, in another world; riches like that are n't got by honest practices." I don't want all this cackle, and, in a word, I want a man who shall be beholden to me for my daughter, and to whom I can say: "Sit down there, son-in-law, and have dinner with me."

MR. JOURDAIN

Those are the sentiments of a petty soul, willing to stay forever in a mean station. Don't talk back to me any more. My daughter shall be a marquise, in spite of all the world, and if you provoke me I 'll make her a duchess.

SCENE XIII

MRS. JOURDAIN, LUCILE, CLEONTE, NICOLE, COVIELLE

MRS. JOURDAIN

Cléonte, don't lose heart yet. (*To Lucile*) Follow me, daughter; come and tell your father boldly that if you cannot have him, you won't marry anybody.

SCENE XIV

CLEONTE, COVIELLE

COVIELLE

You 've made fine work of it, with your lofty sentiments.

CLEONTE

What can I do? I have scruples in this matter which the example of others cannot overcome.

COVIELLE

What nonsense, to take things seriously with such a man! Don't you see he is off his head? Would it have cost you anything to have accommodated yourself to his chimeras?

CLEONTE

You are right; but I did n't suppose one had to bring his proofs of nobility in order to become Mr. Jourdain's son-in-law.

COVIELLE, *laughing*

Ha! ha! ha!

CLEONTE

What are you laughing at?

COVIELLE

At an idea that has come into my head, to trick the fellow, and get you what you want.

CLEONTE

How?

COVIELLE

The idea is altogether comical.

CLEONTE

But what is it?

COVIELLE

There was a certain masquerade performed not long ago, which fits in here excellently, and which I mean to work into a burlesque that I 'll play upon our coxcomb. The thing borders on farce; but with him, we can venture anything; we need n't be too particular, for he is a man to play his rôle in it to a marvel, and swallow greedily all the absurdities we take it into our heads to tell him. I have the actors and costumes all ready; just let me alone for it.

CLEONTE

But tell me . . .

COVIELLE

I will let you know all about it. But let 's get away; here he is, coming back.

SCENE XV

MR. JOURDAIN, *alone*

What the devil does it mean? They are always taunting me with my great lords, and I think nothing

is so fine as keeping company with great lords; there's nothing but honour and civility among 'em, and I 'd gladly give two fingers off my hand, to have been born a count or a marquis.

SCENE XVI

MR. JOURDAIN, LACKEY

LACKEY

Sir, here is the Count, and a lady he 's handing in.

MR. JOURDAIN

Eh! bless me! I have some orders to give. Tell them I shall be here presently.

SCENE XVII

DORIMENE, DORANTE, LACKEY

LACKEY

Master says as how he 'll be here presently.

DORANTE

Very well.

SCENE XVIII

DORIMENE, DORANTE

DORIMENE

I don't know, Dorante; I am taking still another strange step in letting you bring me to a house where I have no acquaintance.

DORANTE

What place then, madam, would you have my love choose to entertain you in, since to avoid

scandal you will not have it be either your house or mine?

DORIMENE

But you forget to say that I am letting myself be drawn on day by day, by receiving too great tokens of your love. In vain do I refuse things, you weary out my resistance, and you have a courteous obstinacy that gently brings me to do everything you wish. It began with frequent visits, declarations came next, and after them serenades and entertainments, followed now by presents. I have resisted it all; but you will not be discouraged, and step by step you get the better of my resolves. I can answer for nothing now, and think that in the end you will bring me to matrimony, which was so far from my thoughts.

DORANTE

Faith, madam, you ought to have been brought to it already. You are a widow, and dependent on no one but yourself; I am my own master, and love you more than life; what stands in the way of your making me completely happy to-day?

DORIMENE

Dear me! Dorante, there must be many good qualities on both sides for two people to live happily together; and the two most reasonable people in the world often find it hard to make a satisfactory match.

DORANTE

You are in the wrong, madam, to imagine so many difficulties; the experiment you have made does not prove anything for other cases.

DORIMENE

At any rate, I come back to this one point: the expense you go to for me disturbs me for two reasons: first, because it commits me more than I could wish; and second, because I am sure, if you will allow me to say it, that you cannot do this without incommoding yourself; and that I would not have.

DORANTE

Ah! madam, these things are trifles; 't is not in that way . . .

DORIMENE

I know what I am saying; and, for instance, the diamond which you have forced me to accept, is of such value . . .

DORANTE

Eh! madam, I beg you, do not make so much of a thing which my love deems unworthy of you, and allow me . . . But here is the master of the house.

SCENE XIX

MR. JOURDAIN, DORIMENE, DORANTE

MR. JOURDAIN, *after having made two bows, finding himself too near Dorimène*

A little farther off, madam.

DORIMENE

What?

MR. JOURDAIN

Just a step, if you please.

DORIMENE

What do you mean?

MR. JOURDAIN

Fall back a little, for the third one.

DORANTE

Madam, Mr. Jourdain knows his manners.

MR. JOURDAIN

Madam, it is a great pride for me to see myself fortunate enough to be so happy as to have the felicity that you should have had the kindness to grant me the grace of doing me the honour of honouring me with the favour of your presence; and if I had but the worth to be worthy of such worth as yours, and if Heaven . . . envious of my happiness . . . had granted me . . . the advantage of finding myself worthy . . . of the . . .

DORANTE

That will do, Mr. Jourdain. Madam does not care for great compliments, and knows that you 're a man of wit. (*Aside to Dorimène*) He is a worthy citizen, ridiculous enough, as you see, in all his behaviour.

DORIMENE, *aside to Dorante*

'T is not hard to see that.

DORANTE

Madam, this is my best friend.

MR. JOURDAIN

'T is too much honour you do me

DORANTE

A gallant man, every inch of him.

DORIMENE

I have a very great esteem for him.

MR. JOURDAIN

I have done nothing as yet, madam, to deserve this favour.

DORANTE, *aside to Mr. Jourdain*

Be sure you take good care not to speak to her of the diamond you gave her.

MR. JOURDAIN, *aside to Dorante*

Could n't I just ask her how she likes it?

DORANTE, *aside to Mr. Jourdain*

What! On no account. It would be vulgar in you; to behave gallantly you must act as if it were not you that had given her this present. (*Aloud*) Mr. Jourdain, madam, says he is enraptured to see you at his house.

DORIMENE

He honours me greatly.

MR. JOURDAIN, *aside to Dorante*

How obliged I am to you, sir, for speaking thus on my account!

DORANTE, *aside to Mr. Jourdain*

I have had the greatest difficulty in getting her to come here.

MR. JOURDAIN, *aside to Dorante*

How can I ever thank you enough?

DORANTE

Madam, he says he thinks you the most beautiful woman in the world.

DORIMENE

'T is too much favour he does me.

MR. JOURDAIN

Madam, 't is you that do all the favours; and . . .

DORANTE

Let us think of the dinner.

SCENE XX

MR. JOURDAIN, DORIMENE, DORANTE, LACKEY

LACKEY, *to Mr. Jourdain*

Everything is ready, sir.

DORANTE

Let us go and sit down, then, and send for the musicians.

SCENE XXI

BALLET

The six cooks who prepared the feast dance together, making the third interlude ; after which they bring in a table covered with various dishes.

ACT IV

SCENE I

DORANTE, DORIMENE, MR. JOURDAIN; THREE SINGERS, ONE WOMAN AND TWO MEN; LACKEY

DORIMENE

Why, Dorante, this is altogether a magnificent feast.

MR. JOURDAIN

You are pleased to say so; but I could wish it were more worthy of your acceptance. (*All sit down at table.*)

DORANTE

Mr. Jourdain is right, madam, to speak as he does; and I am grateful to him for doing the honours of his house so well. I agree with him that the repast is not worthy of you. Since I ordered it, and since I am not so clever in these matters as some of our friends, you have not here a very learned feast, and will find in it some incongruities of good cheer, some barbarisms of taste. If our friend Damis had had a hand in it, everything would be according to the rules; there would be elegance and erudition at every point, and he would not fail to cry up beyond measure, himself, all the features of the treat he was giving you, and compel you to admit his high capacity in the science of good eating; he would

tell you of a fancy loaf baked by itself, with golden kissing crust all the way round that crunches softly between your teeth; of a wine with a velvety body, relieved by a tang that 's not too strong; of a shoulder of mutton garnished with parsley; of a loin of Normandy meadow-veal, as long as this, white, delicate, and like real almond paste between your teeth; of partridges set off with a sauce of wondrous flavour; and, for his masterpiece, of a pearl broth, reinforced by a plump young turkey with little pigeons at the four corners, and a garnish of white onions blended with chicory. But as for me, I must own my ignorance; and, as Mr. Jourdain very well said, I could wish the feast were more worthy of your acceptance.

DORIMENE

My only answer to this compliment is to eat as I am doing.

MR. JOURDAIN

Ah! what beautiful hands you have!

DORIMENE

The hands are nothing to boast of, Mr. Jourdain; you must mean the diamond, which is very handsome.

MR. JOURDAIN

I, madam? Heaven forbid that I should speak of it! That would not be well bred; and the diamond is a very trifle.

DORIMENE

You are mighty hard to please.

MR. JOURDAIN

You are only too kind . . .

DORANTE, *making signs to Mr. Jourdain*

Come, give some wine to Mr. Jourdain, and to the musicians, who will do us the favour of singing a drinking song.

DORIMENE

You add a wondrous relish to good cheer by mingling music with it, and I find myself royally entertained here.

MR. JOURDAIN

Madam, 't is not . . .

DORANTE

Mr. Jourdain, let us be silent and listen to our musicians; what they will let us hear will be much better than all you and I could say. (*The singers, taking glasses, sing two drinking songs, accompanied by full orchestra.*)

FIRST DRINKING SONG

Phillis, a thimbleful, and be not loth;
In your fair hands a glass has wondrous charms!
You and the wine, you lend each other arms;
I feel my love redoubled for you both.
To wine, and to each other, O my fair,
Eternal love we 'll swear!

The wine wins added graces from your lips,
Yet leaves your lips more lovely than before!
Each makes me long to taste the other more,
From both my heart intoxication sips.

To wine, and to each other, O my fair,
Eternal love we 'll swear!

SECOND DRINKING SONG

Come drink, come drink, dear friends!
Time steals our life away;
Let 's use it while we may,
For soon it ends.

Once past the Stygian shore,
Farewell good wine and love.
Drink now, for then 't will prove
We 'll drink no more.

Leave fools their reasonings fine
On life's felicity;
We 'll seek philosophy
In pots of wine.

All else is powerless
To drive dull care away;
In drinking well each day,
Lies happiness.

THE THREE SINGERS TOGETHER

Quick, quick, the wine, boys, pour to everyone!
Pour, pour again, until we say: "Have done!"

DORIMENE

I think 't is impossible to sing better; that is altogether beautiful.

MR. JOURDAIN

Ah! madam, I see here something more beautiful still.

DORIMENE

Indeed! Mr. Jourdain is more of a courtier than I thought.

DORANTE

Why, madam! what do you take Mr. Jourdain for?

MR. JOURDAIN

I wish she would take me for whatever I 'd name.

DORIMENE

Again?

DORANTE, *to Dorimène*

You don't know him yet.

MR. JOURDAIN

She shall know me whenever she will.

DORIMENE

Oh! I give up.

DORANTE

He 's always ready with his repartee. But you have n't noticed, madam, that Mr. Jourdain eats all the pieces you have touched.

DORIMENE

Mr. Jourdain is a man who charms me.

MR. JOURDAIN

If I could charm your heart, I should be . . .

SCENE II

MRS. JOURDAIN, MR. JOURDAIN, DORIMENE, DORANTE, MUSICIANS, LACKEY

MRS. JOURDAIN

Oh! oh! I find good company here, and I see

plainly that I was n't expected. So 't was for this pretty business, Mr. Husband, that you were so eager to pack me off to sister's? I have just seen a stage downstairs, and here I find a banquet fit for a wedding. That 's the way you spend your substance; and that 's how you feast the ladies in my absence, and give them a concert and a play while you send me trotting.

DORANTE

What do you mean, Mrs. Jourdain? And what sort of fancy have you taken into your head, to think that your husband is spending his substance, and that 't is he who is giving this entertainment to the lady. Understand, please, that 't is I; that he has merely lent me his house; and that you ought to be a little more careful what you say.

MR. JOURDAIN

Yes, foolish woman, 't is the Count who offers this treat to the lady, and she is a person of quality. He does me the honour to make use of my house, and is pleased to let me be with him.

MRS. JOURDAIN

That 's all stuff and nonsense. I know what I know.

DORANTE

Wear better spectacles, Mrs. Jourdain, wear better spectacles.

MRS. JOURDAIN

I 've no use for any kind of spectacles, sir, I can see plainly enough. I 've had a smell of this for a

long time, and I tell you I am no fool. It is shameful of you, great lord as you are, to lend a helping hand to my husband's follies. And for a great lady like you, madam, 't is neither handsome nor honest to bring dissension into a family, and to let my husband make love to you.

DORIMENE

What does all this mean? Indeed, Dorante, you are wrong to expose me to the preposterous fancies of this strange woman.

DORANTE, *following Dorimène as she goes out*

Madam, oh madam! where are you going?

MR. JOURDAIN

Madam . . . My Lord, make my apologies to her, and try to bring her back.

SCENE III

MRS. JOURDAIN, MR. JOURDAIN, LACKEY

MR. JOURDAIN

Ah! plague that you are, here 's more of your fine doings! You come and affront me before everybody, and drive people of quality out of my house.

MRS. JOURDAIN

I don't care a fig for their quality.

MR. JOURDAIN

I don't know what restrains me, confound you, from splitting your skull with what is left of the feast that you 've come and disturbed. (*The table is carried off.*)

MRS. JOURDAIN, *going*

I snap my fingers at you. 'T is my rights I 'm defending, and I shall have all the women on my side.

MR. JOURDAIN

You 're doing well to get out of the way of my fury.

SCENE IV

MR. JOURDAIN

She came in at a most unlucky moment. I was in the humour to say fine things; and I never felt so full of wit before. What have we here?

SCENE V

MR. JOURDAIN; COVIELLE, *in disguise*

COVIELLE

Sir, I am not sure whether I have the honour to be known to you.

MR. JOURDAIN

No, sir.

COVIELLE, *holding out his hand about a foot from the ground*

I saw you when you were no bigger than that.

MR. JOURDAIN

Me?

COVIELLE

Yes. You were the prettiest child in the world, and all the ladies used to take you in their arms to kiss you.

MR. JOURDAIN

To kiss me?

COVIELLE

Yes. I was a great friend of your late father.

MR. JOURDAIN

Of my late father?

COVIELLE

Yes. He was a very worthy gentleman.

MR. JOURDAIN

What do you say?

COVIELLE

I say he was a very worthy gentleman.

MR. JOURDAIN

My father?

COVIELLE

Yes.

MR. JOURDAIN

You knew him well?

COVIELLE

Indeed I did.

MR. JOURDAIN

And you knew him for a gentleman?

COVIELLE

Beyond doubt.

MR. JOURDAIN

Then I don't know what to make of the world.

COVIELLE

Why?

MR. JOURDAIN

There are silly people who insist on telling me that he was a shopkeeper.

COVIELLE

He, a shopkeeper! It is pure slander; he never was. All he did was this: he used to be very obliging, very polite, and since he was a connoisseur in cloth, he used to go about choosing it everywhere, and had it brought to his house, and gave it to his friends, for money.

MR. JOURDAIN

I am charmed to know you, and to have you bear witness that my father was a gentleman.

COVIELLE

I will maintain it to all comers.

MR. JOURDAIN

I shall be obliged to you. What business brings you here?

COVIELLE

Since my acquaintance with the worthy gentleman, your late father, which I told you of, I have travelled round the whole world.

MR. JOURDAIN

The whole world?

COVIELLE

Yes.

MR. JOURDAIN

It must be a long way to that country.

COVIELLE

Indeed it is. I came back from my far travels only four days ago; and on account of the interest I take in all that concerns you, I have come to bring you the best piece of news in the world.

MR. JOURDAIN

What news?

COVIELLE

You know the son of the Grand Turk is here?

MR. JOURDAIN

I? No.

COVIELLE

What! He has an absolutely magnificent retinue; people are all flocking to see him, and he has been received here as a very great lord.

MR. JOURDAIN

On my word, I did n't know it.

COVIELLE

The point of advantage for you in all this, is that he 's in love with your daughter.

MR. JOURDAIN

The son of the Grand Turk?

COVIELLE

Yes; and he wants to be your son-in-law.

MR. JOURDAIN

My son-in-law, the son of the Grand Turk?

COVIELLE

The son of the Grand Turk, your son-in-law. I went at once to see him, and since I understand his language perfectly, he conversed at length with me; and after some other talk, he said: *Acciam croc soler ouch allah moustaph gidelum amanahem varahini oussere carbulath?* which is to say: Have you seen a handsome young lady, the daughter of Mr. Jourdain, a gentleman of Paris?

MR. JOURDAIN

The son of the Grand Turk said that of me?

COVIELLE

Yes. When I told him I knew you especially well, and that I had seen your daughter: Ah! said he, *marababa sahem!* which is to say: Ah! how deeply am I enamoured of her!

MR. JOURDAIN

Marababa sahem means, Ah! how deeply am I enamoured of her?

COVIELLE

Yes.

MR. JOURDAIN

Marry, you do well to tell me so; for I never would have thought that *marababa sahem* could mean, Ah! how deeply am I enamoured of her! 'T is an admirable language, this Turkish.

COVIELLE

More than you have any idea of. Do you know what *cacaracamouchen* means?

MR. JOURDAIN

Cacaracamouchen? No.

COVIELLE

It means: My dear soul.

MR. JOURDAIN

Cacaracamouchen means, My dear soul?

COVIELLE

Yes.

MR. JOURDAIN

That is something marvellous. *Cacaracamouchen*, My dear soul. Who would have thought it? It quite astounds me.

COVIELLE

In short, to complete my embassy, he is coming to ask you for your daughter in marriage; and that his father-in-law may be worthy of him, he means to make you *mamamouchi*, which is a certain dignity in his country.

MR. JOURDAIN

Mamamouchi?

COVIELLE

Yes. *Mamamouchi*, which means, in our language, paladin. Paladin, that is, one of those ancient . . . in short, a paladin. There is nothing more noble on earth, and you will rank equal with the greatest lords in the world.

MR. JOURDAIN

The son of the Grand Turk does me great honour; I beg you to take me to him, to pay him my thanks.

COVIELLE

What! he is just coming here.

MR. JOURDAIN

He is coming here?

COVIELLE

Yes; and he is bringing everything needful for your installation.

MR. JOURDAIN

That is doing things mighty sudden.

COVIELLE

His love can endure no delay.

MR. JOURDAIN

What troubles me is, that my daughter is an obstinate wench, and has taken a fancy to a certain Cléonte, and swears she 'll never marry any one else.

COVIELLE

She will change her mind when she sees the son of the Grand Turk; besides, the singular thing about it is, that the son of the Grand Turk looks like this Cléonte, or very nearly so. I have just seen him, he was pointed out to me. The love she bears to the one may easily pass to the other, and . . . But I hear him coming; here he is.

SCENE VI

CLEONTE, *disguised as a Turk;* THREE PAGES, *bearing his long tunic;* MR. JOURDAIN, COVIELLE

CLEONTE

Ambousahim oqui boraf, Giourdina salamalequi!

COVIELLE, *to Mr. Jourdain*

Which is to say: Mr. Jourdain, may your heart be all the year round like a rose-tree in bloom. These are polite forms of expression in his country.

MR. JOURDAIN

I am his Turkish Highness's most humble servant.

COVIELLE

Carigar camboto oustin moraf.

CLEONTE

Oustin yoc catamalequi basum base alla moran!

COVIELLE

He says: May Heaven give you the strength of lions and the cunning of serpents.

MR. JOURDAIN

His Turkish Highness honours me too much, and I wish him all manner of prosperity.

COVIELLE

Ossa binamen sadoc babally oracaf ouram.

CLEONTE

Bel-men.

COVIELLE

He says you must go with him at once to get ready for the ceremony, so that he may then see your daughter and conclude the marriage.

MR. JOURDAIN

All that in two words?

COVIELLE

That is the way with the Turkish tongue; it says much in few words. Go with him at once.

SCENE VII

COVIELLE, *laughing*

Ho! ho! ho! Faith, 't is altogether comical. What a dupe! If he had learnt his rôle by heart, he could not play it better. Ha! ha!

SCENE VIII

DORANTE, COVIELLE

COVIELLE

I beg you, sir, to be good enough to help us here with the matter we have in hand.

DORANTE

Ah! ah! Covielle. Who would have known you? What a get-up!

COVIELLE

As you see. Ha! ha!

DORANTE

What are you laughing at?

COVIELLE

At a thing which well deserves it, sir.

DORANTE

How so?

COVIELLE

I'd give you as many guesses as you please, sir, to hit on the stratagem we are using with Mr. Jourdain, to induce him to give my master his daughter.

DORANTE

I can't guess the stratagem; but I do guess that it won't fail of its effect, since you have it in hand.

COVIELLE

I 'm aware, sir, that you know our covey.

DORANTE

Tell me all about it.

COVIELLE

Step aside a little, to make room for what I see coming. You can see part of the business, while I tell you the rest.

The Turkish Ceremony[1] for ennobling Mr. Jourdain is performed with dancing and music, and makes the fourth interlude. A Mufti, four Dervishes, six Turkish dancers, six Turkish musicians, and other performers on instruments of Turkish style, are the actors in it.

The Mufti, together with the twelve Turks and the four Dervishes, invokes Mohammed, after which Mr. Jourdain is brought in, dressed in Turkish style, but without turban or sword; and they sing to him as follows:

THE MUFTI

Se ti sabir,[2]
Ti respondir;
Se non sabir,
Tazir, tazir.

[1] For the description of the "Turkish Ceremony," I have followed the text of the *Grands Écrivains* edition, which is taken directly from the original edition, and is somewhat briefer than that of Moland and most modern editors.

[2] Up to this point, the supposed Turkish is either of Molière's in-

Mi star Mufti;
Ti qui star ti?
Non intendir;
Tazir, tazir.

In the same language the Mufti asks the Turks what Mr. Jourdain's religion is, and they assure him that he is a Mohammedan. The Mufti invokes Mohammed in the Frankish tongue, singing as follows:

THE MUFTI

Mahametta per Giourdina
Mi pregar sera e mattina:
Voler far un Paladina
De Giourdina, de Giourdina.
Dar turbanta, e dar scarcina,
Con galera e brigantina,
Per deffender Palestina.
Mahametta,[1] etc.

The Mufti asks the Turks if Mr. Jourdain will be faithful in the Mohammedan religion, and sings as follows:

---

vention, or borrowed from a somewhat similar scene in a play by Rotrou; and not more than half a dozen syllables of it are of any known speech. From here on, however, Molière uses the lingo sometimes known as Frankish, which is the language of traders of all nations along the shores of the Mediterranean, especially in the Levant and on the northern coast of Africa, and which is made up of elements from the Turkish, Arabic, Maltese, French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese. This stanza means: "If you know, answer; if you do not know, be still. I am Mufti; who are you? You do not understand; be still, be still."

[1] "I pray to Mohammed night and morning for Jourdain; I will make a paladin of Jourdain. Give the turban, give the turban, give the sword, with a galley and brigantine, to defend Palestine."

THE MUFTI

Star bon Turca Giourdina ?

THE TURKS

Hi valla.[1]

THE MUFTI, *dancing and singing*

Hou la ba, ba la chou, ba la ba, ba la da.

The Turks answer with the same line. The Mufti proposes to give Mr. Jourdain the turban, and sings as follows:

THE MUFTI

Ti non star furba ?

THE TURKS

No, no, no.

THE MUFTI

Non star furfanta ?

THE TURKS

No, no, no.

THE MUFTI

Donar turbanta, donar turbanta.[2]

The Turks repeat all this, while giving the turban to Mr. Jourdain. The Mufti and the Dervishes put on ceremonial turbans, and the Koran is presented to the Mufti, who offers a second invocation, in concert with all the other Turks. After his invocation, he gives Mr. Jourdain the sword, and sings as follows:

[1] "Is Jourdain a good Turk?"—"Yes, by Allah."

[2] "You are not a cheat?"—"No, no, no."—"You are no impostor?"—"No, no, no."—"Give the turban, give the turban."

THE MUFTI

Ti star nobile, e non star fabbola.
Pigliar schiabbola.

The Turks repeat the same lines, all with sword in hand, and six of them dance round Mr. Jourdain, pretending to give him many blows with the flat of their swords.

The Mufti orders the Turks to cudgel Mr. Jourdain, singing as follows:

THE MUFTI

Dara, dara,
Bastonnara, bastonnara.

The Turks repeat the same lines, meanwhile giving him a cudgelling in time with the music.

The Mufti, having had him cudgelled, sings to him:

THE MUFTI

Non tener honta:
Questa star l'ultima affronta.[1]

The Turks repeat the same lines.

The Mufti offers still another invocation, and then withdraws, with all the Turks, dancing and singing, accompanied by several instruments in the Turkish style.

[1] "You are noble, 't is no fable. Take the sword."—"Give, give, a cudgelling, a cudgelling."—"Be not ashamed; this is the last affront."

ACT V

SCENE I

MRS. JOURDAIN, MR. JOURDAIN

MRS. JOURDAIN

Heaven preserve us! Mercy on us! What 's all this? What a figure! Are you going a-mumming, and is this carnival time? Speak, I say, what does it mean? Who rigged you up like that?

MR. JOURDAIN

The impudent woman, to speak thus to a Mamamouchi!

MRS. JOURDAIN

How now?

MR. JOURDAIN

Yes, you must show me respect now; I have just been made Mamamouchi.

MRS. JOURDAIN

What do you mean with your Mamamouchi?

MR. JOURDAIN

Mamamouchi, I tell you. I am Mamamouchi.

MRS. JOURDAIN

What kind of beast is that?

MR. JOURDAIN

Mamamouchi, which is to say, in our language, paladin.

MRS. JOURDAIN

Baladin ! Are you going to dance ballets at your time of life ?

MR. JOURDAIN

What an ignoramus. I say paladin : that is a dignity in which I have just been installed.

MRS. JOURDAIN

How, installed ?

MR. JOURDAIN

Mahameta per Iordina.

MRS. JOURDAIN

What 's that ?

MR. JOURDAIN

Iordina, which is to say Jourdain.

MRS. JOURDAIN

Well, what of it, Jourdain ?

MR. JOURDAIN

Voler far un Paladina de Iordina.

MRS. JOURDAIN

How ?

MR. JOURDAIN

Dar turbanta con galera.

MRS. JOURDAIN

What 's he say ?

MR. JOURDAIN

Per deffender Palestina.

MRS. JOURDAIN

What are you driving at?

MR. JOURDAIN

Dara, dara, bastonnara.

MRS. JOURDAIN

What is all this gibberish?

MR. JOURDAIN

Non tener honta, questa star l' ultima affronta.

MRS. JOURDAIN

What on earth is all that?

MR. JOURDAIN, *singing and dancing*

Hou la ba, ba la chou, ba la ba, ba la da. (*He falls down.*)

MRS. JOURDAIN

Alas! Heaven help us! My husband has gone mad!

MR. JOURDAIN, *getting up and going off*

Peace, Mistress Insolence. Show respect to His Excellency the Mamamouchi.

MRS. JOURDAIN, *alone*

What 's become of his senses? I must run and prevent him from going out. (*Seeing Dorimène and Dorante*) Oh! oh! here 's the rest of our gang. I see nothing but vexation whichever way I turn.

SCENE II

DORANTE, DORIMENE

DORANTE

Yes, madam, you shall see the most amusing thing imaginable; I don't believe 't is possible to find in all the world another man as crazy as he. Then, too, madam, we must try to serve Cléonte in his love-affair, and help him out with this masquerade. He is an honest fellow, and deserves to have us take his part.

DORIMENE

I esteem him highly, and know he deserves good fortune.

DORANTE

Besides which, madam, we have here a ballet which we must n't miss; I want to see whether my idea will succeed.

DORIMENE

Yes, I saw there were magnificent preparations made; and truly, Dorante, I cannot allow things to go on so. I must put an end to your extravagance; and so, to stop all this outlay which you lavish on me, I have resolved to marry you at once. 'T is the only way; for all such things end, as you know, after marriage.

DORANTE

Ah! madam, is it possible you have formed so kind a resolution in my favour?

DORIMENE

'T is only to keep you from ruining yourself; for

otherwise I can see very well that before long you would not have a penny left.

DORANTE

How deeply grateful I am to you, madam, for the care you take to preserve my estate! It is wholly yours, and my heart with it. You shall use them both at your own good pleasure.

DORIMENE

I shall use them both well. But here is our fellow; and an amazing figure he is!

SCENE III

MR. JOURDAIN, DORIMENE, DORANTE

DORANTE

Sir, this lady and I have come to pay homage to your new dignity, and congratulate you on marrying your daughter to the son of the Grand Turk.

MR. JOURDAIN, *after having made his salaams*

Sir, I wish you the strength of serpents and the cunning of lions.

DORIMENE

I am very glad to be among the first, sir, to come and congratulate you on the height of glory to which you have risen.

MR. JOURDAIN

Madam, may your rose-bush be in bloom all the year round. I am infinitely obliged to you for your interest in the honours that have come upon me; and I am greatly rejoiced to see you returned here,

so that I may tender to you my most humble excuses for my wife's fantastic behaviour.

DORIMENE

That is nothing; I can excuse such an impulse in her; your heart must be precious to her, and 't is no wonder that the possession of a man like you should inspire some alarms.

MR. JOURDAIN

The possession of my heart is wholly yours.

DORANTE

You see, madam, that Mr. Jourdain is not one of those people who are blinded by prosperity, and that in all his greatness he still will own his friends.

DORIMENE

That is the mark of a truly noble soul.

DORANTE

Where is His Turkish Highness? We should like, as friends of yours, to pay him our respects.

MR. JOURDAIN

Here he comes, and I have sent for my daughter to be married to him.

SCENE IV

MR. JOURDAIN, DORIMENE, DORANTE; CLEONTE, *dressed as a Turk*

DORANTE, *to Cléonte*

Sir, we have come to pay our homage to Your Highness, as friends of the gentleman your father-in-law, and respectfully to assure you of our most humble devotion.

MR. JOURDAIN

Where is the dragoman, to tell him who you are, and make him understand what you are saying? You shall see that he can answer you; he speaks Turkish marvellous well. Hallo! where the deuce has he gone? (*To Cléonte*) *Strouf, strif, strof, straf.* This gentleman is a *grande segnore, grande segnore, grande segnore;* and the lady is a *grande dama, grande dama.* (*Seeing that he is not understood*) Alack! (*To Cléonte, pointing to Dorante*) He be Mamamouchi Frenchee, and she be Mamamouchess Frenchee. I can't speak any more plainly than that. Good! There 's the interpreter.

SCENE V

MR. JOURDAIN, DORIMENE, DORANTE; CLEONTE, *dressed as a Turk;* COVIELLE, *in disguise*

MR. JOURDAIN

Where are you going, now? We can't speak a word without you. (*Pointing to Cléonte*) Just tell him that this gentleman and lady are persons of great quality who have come as friends of mine to pay their respects to him, and assure him of their devotion. (*To Dorimène and Dorante*) You shall see how he 'll answer.

COVIELLE

Alabala crociam acci boram alabamen.

CLEONTE

Catalequi tubal ourin soter amalouchan.

MR. JOURDAIN, *to Dorimène and Dorante*

You see?

COVIELLE

He says, May the rain of prosperity forever water the garden of your family.

MR. JOURDAIN

Did n't I tell you he could speak Turkish!

DORANTE

Admirable.

SCENE VI

LUCILE, CLEONTE, MR. JOURDAIN, DORIMENE, DORANTE, COVIELLE

MR. JOURDAIN

Come, daughter; come here, come and give your hand to the gentleman who does you the honour to ask for you in marriage.

LUCILE

Why, father, what a guy you are! Are you acting a play?

MR. JOURDAIN

No, no, 't is no play; 't is a very serious matter, and the most honourable for you that heart could wish. (*Pointing to Cléonte*) Here is the husband I bestow on you.

LUCILE

On me, father?

MR. JOURDAIN

Yes, on you. Come, put your hand in his, and thank Heaven for your good fortune.

LUCILE

I don't want to be married.

MR. JOURDAIN

I want you married, and I 'm your father.

LUCILE

I'll do nothing of the kind.

MR. JOURDAIN

Oh! what a to-do! Come, I tell you. Here, your hand.

LUCILE

No, father; I have told you, no power can force me to accept any husband but Cléonte; and I will sooner go to all extremities than . . . (*Recognising Cléonte*) To be sure, you are my father; I owe you entire obedience; and it is for you to dispose of me according to your pleasure.

MR. JOURDAIN

Ah! I am charmed to see you return so quickly to a sense of your duty; I like to have an obedient daughter.

SCENE VII

MRS. JOURDAIN, CLEONTE, MR. JOURDAIN, LUCILE, DORANTE, DORIMENE, COVIELLE

MRS. JOURDAIN

How now? What 's all this? I hear you 're set on marrying your daughter to a mummer.

MR. JOURDAIN

Will you be still, foolish woman? You always come and thrust in your impertinence everywhere. 'T is impossible to teach you common-sense.

MRS. JOURDAIN

You are the one 't is impossible to teach any sense to; you go from folly to folly. What are you driving at now, and what do you mean with this crazy match?

MR. JOURDAIN

I am going to wed my daughter to the son of the Grand Turk.

MRS. JOURDAIN

To the son of the Grand Turk?

MR. JOURDAIN, *pointing to Covielle*

Yes. Make your compliments to him by the dragoman there.

MRS. JOURDAIN

I 've no use for any dragoman; I 'll tell him for myself, to his face, that he sha'n't have my daughter.

MR. JOURDAIN

Will you hold your tongue, I say again?

DORANTE

What! Mrs. Jourdain, you set yourself in opposition to an honour such as this? You refuse His Turkish Highness for son-in-law?

MRS. JOURDAIN

Bless me, sir! Mind your own business.

DORANTE

'T is a great honour, and not to be refused.

MRS. JOURDAIN

Madam, I beg you likewise not to trouble yourself about what does n't concern you.

DORANTE

It is our friendship for you that makes us take an interest in your welfare.

MRS. JOURDAIN

I 'll get along without your friendship.

DORANTE

Your daughter here submits to her father's wishes.

MRS. JOURDAIN

My daughter consents to marry a Turk?

DORANTE

Certainly.

MRS. JOURDAIN

Can she f orget Cléonte?

DORANTE

What will one not do to be a great lady?

MRS. JOURDAIN

I 'd strangle her with my own hands if she played a trick like that.

MR. JOURDAIN

This is too much prate. I tell you this marriage shall be.

MRS. JOURDAIN

And I tell you it shall not be.

MR. JOURDAIN

Oh! what a to-do.

LUCILE

Mother!

MRS. JOURDAIN

Go to, you 're a pitiful hussy.

MR. JOURDAIN

What, you scold her for obeying me.

MRS. JOURDAIN

Yes. She is as much mine as yours.

COVIELLE, *to Mrs. Jourdain*

Madam!

MRS. JOURDAIN

What have you got to say about it?

COVIELLE

One word.

MRS. JOURDAIN

I 've no use for your word.

COVIELLE, *to Mr. Jourdain*

Sir, if she will listen to a word in private, I promise to make her consent to everything you wish.

MRS. JOURDAIN

I shall not consent.

COVIELLE

Only listen to me.

MRS. JOURDAIN

No.

MR. JOURDAIN, *to Mrs. Jourdain*

Listen to him.

MRS. JOURDAIN

No; I will not listen.

MR. JOURDAIN

He will tell you . . .

MRS. JOURDAIN

I won't be told.

MR. JOURDAIN

Just like a woman's obstinacy! Will it do you any harm to hear him?

COVIELLE

Only hear me; then you shall do as you please.

MRS. JOURDAIN

Well! What?

COVIELLE, *aside to Mrs. Jourdain*

We 've been making signs to you, madam, this hour or more. Don't you see that all this is only done to humour your husband's whimsies; that we are tricking him by this disguise, and that the son of the Grand Turk is Cléonte himself?

MRS. JOURDAIN, *aside to Covielle*

Oho!

COVIELLE, *aside to Mrs. Jourdain*

And I, Covielle, am the dragoman.

MRS. JOURDAIN, *aside to Covielle*

Ah! in that case I give in.

COVIELLE, *aside to Mrs. Jourdain*

Don't let the cat out of the bag.

MRS. JOURDAIN, *aloud*

Yes, it is all right, I consent to the marriage.

MR. JOURDAIN

Ah! now everybody submits to reason. (*To Mrs. Jourdain*) You would n't listen to him. I was sure he 'd explain to you about the son of the Grand Turk.

MRS. JOURDAIN

He has explained it to me properly, and I am satisfied. Let us send for the notary.

DORANTE

Well said. And, Mrs. Jourdain, that your mind may be perfectly at rest, and that you may abandon at once all jealousy of your husband, this lady and I will make use of the same notary for our marriage.

MRS. JOURDAIN

I give my consent to that, too.

MR. JOURDAIN, *aside to Dorante*

So, you 'll hoodwink her.

DORANTE, *aside to Mr. Jourdain*

We must needs put her off with this pretence.

MR. JOURDAIN, *aside*

Good, good. (*Aloud*) Go fetch the notary.

DORANTE

While he is coming, and drawing up his writings, let us see our ballet, and offer His Turkish Highness the diversion of it.

MR. JOURDAIN

A good idea. Let 's take our places.

MRS. JOURDAIN

And Nicole?

MR. JOURDAIN

I give her to the dragoman ; and my wife, to anybody that will have her.

COVIELLE

Sir, I thank you. (*Aside*) If 't is possible to find a madder fellow, I 'll go tell it at Rome.

The comedy ends with the ballet which had been prepared.

LES
FEMMES SAVANTES

COMEDIE EN CINQ ACTES

11 MARS, 1672

THE LEARNED LADIES

A COMEDY IN FIVE ACTS

MARCH 11, 1672

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The Learned Ladies ended the war begun by *The Affected Misses*, against intellectual snobbishness, bad taste, and affectation of all sorts. Between these two plays, separated by an interval of less than twelve years and a half, lies the whole career of Molière, and in the contrast between them, nearly alike as are the subjects treated, lies the range of Molière's great and rapid development as a comic dramatist and as a critic of life. Though he had attacked worse vices in *Tartuffe* and pictured higher virtues in *The Misanthrope*, though he had gone deeper in *Don Juan* and *The Miser*, and his humour had been broader in *The Tradesman Turned Gentleman* and *The Doctor by Compulsion*, yet in this next to the last of his plays he shows an ease, breadth, and sureness in character-drawing and in picturing the manners of his time, a command of technique both in the dramatic construction of the play as a whole and in the detailed presentation of each scene and character, in short a complete mastery of his material and his means of expression, such as he had hardly attained before. The greater seriousness and significance of his work has brought with it hardly any apparent loss of gayety or spontaneity, while his humour has grown richer, and his attack upon contemporary foibles and shams far bolder.

The age had developed as well as Molière. The *précieuses* had become "learned ladies"; besides keeping up with elegant literature, they had studied philosophy, and, under the inspiration of Descartes, had even attempted something of the sciences, especially physics and

astronomy ; they could talk with apparent intelligence of atoms, vortexes, and vacuum, and could distinguish by name at least, the more important doctrines of Plato, Aristotle, and Epicurus. Like the true *précieuses*, these learned ladies had their imitators, who merely picked up a few catch-words of their jargon. Molière satirised both imitators and originals mercilessly, without trying to make any distinction as he had done in the *Précieuses ridicules*. His three learned ladies belong to a family of the rich *bourgeoisie ;* but in the wit whom they worship, and in the pedant whom they embrace "for the love of Greek," he puts on the stage two contemporary authors who were favourites of the ladies of highest rank in the land. The famous sonnet of Trissotin, "To Princess Uranie, upon her Fever," is to be found word for word in the *Oeuvres galantes en prose et en vers* of the Abbé Cotin, published in 1663 ; it is addressed "To Mlle. de Longueville, now Duchess of Nemours, on her quartan fever" ; Mlle. de Longueville was of the royal blood ; and the "certain princess" who had esteemed this sonnet "quite delicate" was Mlle. de Montpensier, own cousin of the King Louis XIV. Trissotin's "epigram, or rather madrigal" in which he describes himself as reduced to his last penny through the purchase of a coach, embossed with gold and blasonry, for his mistress, is likewise to be found in the *Gallant Works* of this favoured poet.

It is said that Molière at first called him Tricotin in the play, and then, not to leave the resemblance too close, modified this to Trissotin, or "triple fool"—a generous concession ! Charles Cotin, early a frequenter of the Hotel de Rambouillet, and a member of the French Academy since 1655, had produced abundantly in the various classes of parlour literature, such as madrigals, epistles, and especially enigmas, which he published, with an *Essay on the Enigma*, in 1659. His self-esteem

is fairly illustrated in his saying: "My monogram is two C's, interwoven and forming a circle; which, in a mystic sense, may signify the circle of this round earth, which my works shall fill." He was so bold as to attack Boileau, in two anonymous works, and to accuse him not only (by distorting his own words) of disloyalty and atheism, but even of being a friend and admirer of the play-actor Molière! Boileau, the "author of the *Satires*" (p. 427), answered with bitter open attacks, often repeated. But it was Molière who gave the finishing stroke to Cotin's reputation, by ridiculing him on the stage with an Aristophanic directness hardly justified even by the manners of literary controversy of that time. It did not kill the poor Abbé, as has sometimes been alleged; but when he came to die, eight or nine years after Molière, the "Father of the French Enigma" (as he proudly called himself) had this fit epitaph:

> What is the only point wherein
> Cotin differs from Trissotin? . . . .
> The life of Cotin now is over,
> But Trissotin lives on forever.

Vadius almost certainly represents Ménage, a *précieux* and pedant, who "knew Greek as well as any man in France," wrote society verse, eclogues, and *ballades* in Greek, Latin, Italian, and French, and had a bitter quarrel with Cotin. This quarrel is said to have occurred at Mlle. de Montpensier's and to have originated in Ménage's inadvertent criticism of the *Sonnet to Princess Uranie*. In any case, Ménage published a Latin epigram against Cotin, and Cotin answered with a collection of abusive verse, called *La Ménagerie*, and dedicated to Mlle. de Montpensier. Ménage published in 1672 his *New Observations on the French Language*.

The plans of the learned ladies for purifying French speech were also copied by Molière from real life. The French Academy had from its foundation planned to publish an authoritative *Dictionary ;* but this was not completed for nearly sixty years. Meanwhile one of the chief members, Vaugelas, published in 1647 his *Remarks on the French Language*, and this work was taken as fixing the standard of good usage. Not even kings or emperors, says Vaugelas in his *Preface*, have the right to create new words—and Philaminte vaguely remembers this passage. But *précieuses* and "learned ladies" were more strict than Vaugelas. They even sought to banish from the language words in any one syllable of which a prurient mind might find cause for offence. They, themselves, however, were by no means free from frequent vulgarity of speech, such as might be expected from the half-educated. Their "Platonism," too, resulted in anything but genuine purity of thought, and their real or pretended aversion to marriage expressed itself in terms hardly quotable, which Molière has rather toned down than exaggerated, and in "Solecisms" of conduct which Chrysale only hints at. One has but to glance at the "Gallant" Works of Cotin the gallant abbé, to get clearer ideas on this point than Molière cares to give us. Molière keeps his work in the domain of hearty good humour and fresh spirited comedy. Over against his "learned ladies" and his conceited "wits," he sets not only the bourgeois Chrysale, but the man of the world, Ariste, the man of true taste and true aristocracy of intelligence, Clitandre, and best of all Henriette, neither prudish nor prurient, not learned or ignorant, but sensible, healthy, sane, humorous, and altogether charming.

CHARACTERS	ACTORS
CHRYSALE, a worthy citizen	MOLIERE
PHILAMINTE, wife of Chrysale	HUBERT
ARMANDE, daughters of Chrysale and Philaminte	Mlle. DEBRIE
HENRIETTE, daughters of Chrysale and Philaminte	Mlle. MOLIERE
ARISTE, brother of Chrysale	BARON
BELISE, sister of Chrysale	Mlle. VILLEAUBRUN
CLITANDRE, in love with Henriette	LA GRANGE
TRISSOTIN, a wit	LA THORILLIERE
VADIUS, a scholar	DU CROISY
MARTINE, kitchen-maid	MARTINE
LEPINE, a lackey	
JULIEN, valet to Vadius	
A NOTARY	

Scene, Paris, in Chrysale's house

THE LEARNED LADIES

A COMEDY

ACT I

SCENE I

ARMANDE, HENRIETTE

ARMANDE

What! sister, is the lovely name of maid
A title you are willing to abandon?
You dare to take delight in getting married?
Can such a vulgar plan be in your mind?

HENRIETTE

Yes, sister.

ARMANDE

Oh! can such a *yes* be borne with?
Can it be heard without a sick disgust?

HENRIETTE

But what has marriage, in itself, to make you . . .

ARMANDE

Oh! heavens! fie!

HENRIETTE

But what . . .?

ARMANDE

Oh! fie, I tell you!
Can't you imagine what repulsive pictures
That word, when it is uttered, conjures up?
Or what strange images it shocks one with?
Or how it soils the thoughts with filthy visions?
Do you not shudder at it? Can you bear,
Sister, to face the sequel of that word?

HENRIETTE

The sequel, sister, when I face it, shows me
A husband, children, and a home to care for;
Nothing in that, so far as I can see,
Need shock you quite so much, or make you shudder.

ARMANDE

O heavens! Can you be charmed with such attachments?

HENRIETTE

Why, at my age, what better can I do
Than to unite myself, by vows of marriage,
With someone whom I love, and who loves me,
And, in this bond of growing tenderness,
Enjoy a happy and a blameless life?
Has such a well-matched union no attractions?

ARMANDE

Alack! how grovelling a mind is yours!
And what a petty rôle you play in life,
To coop yourself at home, 'mid household cares,
And catch no glimpse of more refined delights
Than worshipping a man, and rearing monkeys!
No! Leave such coarser joys to common persons;
Lift up your thoughts and hopes to higher things,

And train your taste to care for nobler pleasures;
So, treating sense and substance with contempt,
Devote yourself to mind alone, as we do.
You have our mother for your perfect model,
Whom all men honour with the name of learned;
Try, then, like me, to prove yourself her daughter;
Aspire to show a like intelligence,
And learn to feel those raptures exquisite
Which love of study pours through every vein.
Nay, scorn to be the slave of some mere man,
Be wedded, sister, to philosophy,
That lifts us far above mankind, and gives
The reason sovereign lordship and control
Over our brutish parts, whose gross desires
Debase us to the level of the beasts.
Such is the noble love, the dear attachment
That ought to fill each moment of our lives.
Those lower cares so many women covet
Appear to me most wretched pettiness.

HENRIETTE

Heaven, that orders all with sovereign power,
Forms us at birth for different uses, sister.
Not every spirit, if it would, can furnish
The stuff of which philosophers are made.
If yours was born to scale those lofty heights
Climbed by the learned in their speculations,
Mine is more fit to creep along the ground;
Its weakness limits it to lesser cares.
Let us not thwart the wise decrees of Heaven,
But follow each the promptings of her instinct.
You, lifted on the wings of noble genius,
Dwell in the regions of philosophy,

While I, remaining on my lower level,
Shall taste the earthly joys that marriage offers.
Thus, though by methods so opposed, we both
Shall take our mother for a model; you
In nobler aspirations of the soul,
I in the baser pleasures of the senses;
You, in productions of the mind and spirit,
And I, in more material products, sister.

ARMANDE

But when one tries to imitate a model,
One ought to choose the nobler traits to copy;
It is not taking her for pattern, sister,
Merely to cough and spit like her.

HENRIETTE

But you
Would hardly be all this that you 're so proud of,
If mother had not had some other traits;
'T is well for you her noble genius did n't
Spend all its time upon philosophy.
A little lenience, please; endure in me
Baseness to which you owe your very being;
And don't, by making me like you, suppress
Some little scholar longing to be born.

ARMANDE

I see your vulgar spirit can't give up
The obstinate desire to get a husband;
But tell me, please, whom you expect to have;
At least, you 've not set out to catch Clitandre?

HENRIETTE

Why not? Does he lack merit? Is the choice
Unworthy?

ARMANDE

No; but it would not be decent
To try to win away another's conquest;
'T is not unknown to people that Clitandre
Has sighed for me, and paid me open court.

HENRIETTE

Yes; but his sighs were all as naught to you;
You do not condescend to human frailties;
Your mind renounces marriage once for all,
And makes philosophy its only passion.
So, since your heart has no designs upon him,
What matters it to you if others want him?

ARMANDE

The sovereign rule of reason o'er our senses
Does not prevent our finding worship sweet;
We may refuse, for husband, one whose merit
Makes him acceptable as our adorer.

HENRIETTE

I did n't hinder him from still adoring
Your high perfections; only, when he came
And offered me the love which you 'd rejected,
I did accept it.

ARMANDE

Ah! but can you, pray,
Rely upon a passion sprung from spite?
Think you his love for you is very strong,
And all desire for me is dead within him?

HENRIETTE

He 's told me so; and I believe him, sister.

ARMANDE

Don't be so simple and confiding, sister;
Think, when he tells you he 's abandoned me
And loves you only, that he does n't mean
Just what he 's saying, and deceives himself.

HENRIETTE

Perhaps; but if you please, 't is very easy
For us to learn the truth; I see him coming;
He can enlighten us upon the matter.

SCENE II

CLITANDRE, ARMANDE, HENRIETTE

HENRIETTE

To free me from a doubt my sister raises,
Declare your heart, for her or me, Clitandre;
Tell the whole truth, and let us know, I beg you,
Which one of us can rightly claim your love.

ARMANDE

No, no, I do not wish to force your passion
To such a harsh extreme; these explanations,
I know, are most embarrassing; I spare you.

CLITANDRE

Madam, a heart so little used to hiding
As mine, feels no restraint in free confession.
'T is not at all embarrassing to me;
So I will own, with clear and open conscience,
(*Pointing to Henriette*)
My homage, love, devotion, all are hers.
You should not be surprised at this avowal;
You chose to have it so. Your charms had won

My heart, and made me wholly yours forever;
My sighs had proved the ardour of my passion;
But you despised your conquest; in your service
I suffered untold slights; you played the tyrant,
Until, out-wearied with my pains, I sought
A victor more humane, and chains less galling.
(*Again pointing to Henriette*)
Here, madam, I have found them, once for all,
In these fair eyes which I shall ever worship;
With looks of sympathy they dried my tears,
And did not scorn me, though you 'd cast me off.
Their kindness touched me so, that nothing now
Can ever tear me from my willing bondage;
And I beseech you, madam, make no effort
To change my feelings, or reclaim a heart
That will be faithful even unto death.

ARMANDE

Alack! who told you, sir, that anyone
Could have that wish, or care for you so much?
I find you quite ridiculous to think so
And hugely impudent to tell me of it.

HENRIETTE

Oh! softly, sister. Where 's that moral sense
That rules so strictly o'er our brutish natures
And holds in check all impulses to anger?

ARMANDE

Do you, who talk to me of moral sense,
Show any, in returning a man's love
Without the leave of those who gave you being?
Learn that your duty is to do their will,
That if you love, it must be by their choosing,

That they 're the arbiters of your affections,
Which it is crime to yield without their leave.

HENRIETTE

I thank you for the goodness that you show
In teaching me so carefully my duty.
My heart will rule its conduct by your counsels;
And now—to show you that I profit by them—
Clitandre, make haste to justify your suit
By winning the approval of my parents.
Secure a lawful claim on my affections,
And make it not a crime for me to love you.

CLITANDRE

I 'll use my every effort to that end;
I was but waiting for your dear permission.

ARMANDE

You triumph, sister, and appear to think
That this chagrins me.

HENRIETTE

I? By no means, sister.
I know the laws of reason rule your senses,
That through the teachings of the higher wisdom
You are above such weakness. Far from thinking
That you 're chagrined, I hope you 'll even deign
To help me, by supporting his proposal,
And hasten thus the moment of our marriage.
I beg you to; and with this end in view . . .

ARMANDE

A pretty jest, indeed! You 're mighty proud
Of picking up a heart that 's flung to you.

HENRIETTE

Eh! flung to me or not, you 'd rather like
This heart; if you could get it back from me,
You 'd quickly be at pains to stoop and take it.

ARMANDE

I will not condescend to answer you;
Such foolish speeches merit no attention.

HENRIETTE

In that you 're right, and show a moderation
So rare, 't is far beyond all expectation.

SCENE III

CLITANDRE, HENRIETTE

HENRIETTE

Your frank avowal took her quite aback.

CLITANDRE

She richly merited my open flouting;
Her pride deserves no less than such plain dealing.
But, since you give me leave, I 'll find your father . . .

HENRIETTE

The safest way, is first to win my mother.
My father will consent to anything;
But his decisions carry little weight;
Heaven blessed him with an easy-going temper
That yields at once to all his wife's demands.
She rules, and with the tone of a dictator
Lays down as law whatever she resolves on.
I wish you could, with her and with my aunt,
Conform a little better to their humours,

And try, by flattering their fads and fancies,
To win a warmer place in their regard.

CLITANDRE

My heart is too sincere; I never could,
Even in your sister, flatter their conceits;
These female Doctors do not suit my taste.
I like to have a woman know a little
Of everything, but hate in her the passion
Of learning for the sake of being learned;
In conversation, I should like her often
To know when not to know the things she knows;
If she must study, let her try to hide it—
Have knowledge, but not wish to make it known—
Not quote her authors, talk in pompous phrases,
And drag her learning in on all occasions.
I much respect your mother; but I cannot
In any way approve her strange chimera,
Or make myself the echo of her words
In praise and worship of her man of genius.
Her Mister Trissotin disgusts and bores me;
It drives me mad to see how she esteems him,
And ranks with great and noble geniuses
A dunce whose writings everybody damns,
A pedant fool whose all too generous pen
Supplies the market-place with wrapping-papers.

HENRIETTE

His talk, his writings, everything about him
Seems wearisome to me; I find I share
Your taste and way of thinking; but since he
Has so much influence upon my mother,
You ought to force yourself to tolerate him.
A lover pays his court where lies his heart,

Seeks to ingratiate himself, avoids
All opposition, and endeavours even
To gain the favour of the very house-dog.

CLITANDRE

You 're right; but Mister Trissotin inspires
In me a deep and dominant disgust.
I can't, to win his favour, stoop so low
As to admire his wretched compositions;
He first appeared before me in his works,
And so I knew him well before I saw him.
I soon discovered, in the trash he writes,
The very type of his pedantic person
Displayed at large: that overweening pride,
That dauntless egotism, that assurance
Of easy indolent self-confidence
Which makes him so contented with himself,
Forever smiling on himself, forever
So grateful to himself for all he does
He 'd not consent to barter his renown
For all the honours of a famous captain.

HENRIETTE

You have good eyes, if you can see all that.

CLITANDRE

The thing went farther, even to his looks,
For in the poems that he pelts us with
I pictured to myself the poet's aspect;
Indeed, I guessed his features so exactly
That one day, meeting with a certain fellow,
I wagered it was Trissotin himself,
And found in fact that I had won my wager.

HENRIETTE

Oh! what a story!

CLITANDRE

No, the thing is true.
But here 's your aunt. I pray you, give me leave
To tell her now the secret of my heart
And try to win her favour with your mother.

SCENE IV

BELISE, CLITANDRE

CLITANDRE

Allow a lover, madam, thus to seize
The chance this happy moment offers him
To speak, and to reveal his earnest passion . . .

BELISE

Ah! softly; do not lay your heart too open.
If I must count you in my list of lovers,
Then be your eyes your sole interpreters,
And don't declare, by any other language,
Desires which I am wont to take for insults.
Love, sigh, and burn, for me and for my charms;
But let me be permitted not to know it.
Your secret passion I may overlook,
While you reveal it only by your silence;
But if your lips presume to meddle, then
You must be banished from my sight forever.

CLITANDRE

Be not alarmed about my heart's intentions.
The object of my love is Henriette;

I earnestly beseech you, of your kindness,
To help me, madam, in my suit for her.

BELISE

Certes, the shift is clever, I must own;
This subtle subterfuge deserves all praise;
In all the novels I have cast my eyes on,
I never met with any more ingenious.

CLITANDRE

This, madam, is no clever shift at all;
It is a true avowal of my feelings.
Heaven, by the ties of love that cannot alter,
Has bound my heart to Henriette; she holds me
A captive in her gentle sway; and marriage
With her is all the happiness I hope for.
'T is in your power to help me; all I wish
Is that you deign to favour my addresses.

BELISE

I see the gentle bias of your pleading,
And know what I must take this name to mean.
Your metaphor is artful; not to drop it,
I 'll let my heart make some reply, and say
That Henriette is quite averse to marriage,
And you must love her still, but seek no favour.

CLITANDRE

Eh! what 's the use of this confusion, madam?
And why persist in thinking what is not?

BELISE

Alack! don't stand upon punctilios. Stop
Denying what your looks have often told me.
Enough that I am pleased with this device

Your passion so adroitly pitched upon,
And that I 'm willing to allow your homage
Under the mask respect has made it wear,
Provided that its raptures, ruled by honour,
Bring to my shrine the purest worship only.

CLITANDRE

But . . .

BELISE

No, farewell. This must suffice you now,
And I 've said more already than I meant to.

CLITANDRE

But you mistake . . .

BELISE

Enough. I 'm blushing now.
My modesty has made a wondrous effort.

CLITANDRE

Oh, hang me if I love you! It 's absurd . . .

BELISE

No, no, I must not hear another word.

SCENE V

CLITANDRE, *alone*

Deuce take the crazy woman's prepossessions!
Who ever saw the like of her obsessions?
I give the business up! It 's indispensable
To get the help of someone who is sensible.

ACT II

SCENE I

ARISTE, *just parting from Clitandre, and still speaking to him*

Yes, yes, I 'll bring your answer presently;
I 'll urge, entreat, do everything I can.
How much a lover has to say, for just
One word!—and how impatiently insists
On what he wishes!

SCENE II

CHRYSALE, ARISTE

ARISTE

Ah!—God save you, brother!

CHRYSALE

And you, good brother!

ARISTE

Do you know my errand?

CHRYSALE

No; but I 'll listen, if you wish to tell me.

ARISTE

Already, for some time, you 've known Clitandre?

CHRYSALE

Yes; and I 've noticed that he comes here often.

ARISTE

And how do you esteem him, brother, pray?

CHRYSALE

A man of honour, courage, wit, and breeding;
I know but few men whom I 'd call his equals.

ARISTE

I 'm glad you think so well of him; I 've come,
At his request, to see you.

CHRYSALE

His late father
Was one of my best friends. We met at Rome.

ARISTE

That 's good.

CHRYSALE

He was a worthy gentleman.

ARISTE

I 've heard so.

CHRYSALE

We were eight-and-twenty then,
And, on my word, a pair of gay young fellows.

ARISTE

I well believe you.

CHRYSALE

Eh!—the Roman ladies . . . !
Why, all the town was talking of our frolics;
And were n't the husbands jealous!

ARISTE

Very good;
But now, a word about what brings me here.

SCENE III

BELISE, *coming in quietly and listening;* CHRYSALE, ARISTE

ARISTE

I come as spokesman for Clitandre; his heart
Is smitten with the love of Henriette.

CHRYSALE

What! of my daughter?

ARISTE

Yes. He 's charmed with her;
I never saw a more impassioned lover.

BELISE, *to Ariste*

No, no; I understand all this. But you
Don't know the facts; they 're not as you imagine.

ARISTE

What, sister?

BELISE

You have let Clitandre deceive you;
His heart is smitten with another fair.

ARISTE

You 're joking! 'T is not Henriette he loves?

BELISE

No; that I 'm sure of.

ARISTE

But he told me so.

BELISE

Oh! yes.

ARISTE

And he commissioned me to come
To-day, and ask her father for her hand.

BELISE

All very well.

ARISTE

He even urged me warmly
To hasten on the happy consummation.

BELISE

Better and better. Nobly carried through.
We 've made ourselves a screen of Henriette,
A clever blind, a cloak, a veil, good brother,
To hide another love,—but that 's my secret;
Still, I 'll consent to undeceive you both.

ARISTE

Well, since you know so much, please tell us, sister,
Who is this other object of his love?

BELISE

You want to know?

ARISTE

Yes. Who?

BELISE

I.

ARISTE

You?

BELISE

Myself.

ARISTE

Pshaw, sister!

BELISE

What d' ye mean by that *Pshaw, sister?*
What 's so surprising in the thing I tell you?
She who hath charms like mine, methinks, may say
There 's more than one heart subject to her sway;
Damis, Dorante, Cléonte, and Lycidas
Are proof enough one does n't lack attractions.

ARISTE

These men all love you?

BELISE

Yes, with all their might.

ARISTE

They 've told you so?

BELISE

Not one has been so bold;
They 've worshipped me so humbly hitherto
That not a word of love has e'er escaped them.
But mute interpreters have done their office,
And offered me their hearts and their devotion.

ARISTE

Damis is almost never known to come here.

BELISE

That is to show me more complete respect.

ARISTE

Dorante is never done with girding at you.

BELISE

That is the transport of a jealous passion.

ARISTE

Cléonte and Lycidas have both got married.

BELISE

That was because I drove them to despair.

ARISTE

Lord, sister, this is merest vapouring.

CHRYSALE, *to Bélise*

Come, come; you should get rid of these chimeras.

BELISE

Chimeras! Ha! These are chimeras, say you?
Chimeras, I? *Chimeras*, truly, is good!
I am delighted with *chimeras*, brothers;
I really did n't know I had chimeras.

SCENE IV

CHRYSALE, ARISTE

CHRYSALE

Our sister 's daft, for sure.

ARISTE

Worse every day!
But come, once more, let 's get back to my errand.
Clitandre asks you for Henriette in marriage;
Tell me, what answer shall be given him?

CHRYSALE

What answer? I consent, with all my heart,
And hold myself most highly honoured too.

ARISTE

You know he 's not abundantly endowed
With worldly goods.

CHRYSALE

That is of no importance.
He 's rich in virtues, which is more than treasure;
Besides, his father was my boon companion.

ARISTE

Then let us tell your wife, and try to win
Her favour too.

CHRYSALE

That 's needless; I accept him.

ARISTE

Quite true. But to confirm your own consent
'T would do no harm to have, too, her approval.
Let 's go and . . .

CHRYSALE

Nonsense. 'T is not necessary.
I answer for my wife, and take the business
Upon myself.

ARISTE

But still . . .

CHRYSALE

Enough. Don't fear.
I 'll go at once and see that she agrees.

ARISTE

Oh! very well. I 'll talk with Henriette,
And then come back to learn . . .

CHRYSALE

The whole thing 's settled;
I 'll tell my wife about it now, at once.

SCENE V

CHRYSALE, MARTINE

MARTINE

Bean't that my luck, though! There! The sayin' 's true,
When folks would drown a dog, they say he 's mad;
And others' sarvice ain't a thing to tie to.

CHRYSALE

What now? Martine, what ails you?

MARTINE

Eh? What ails me?

CHRYSALE

Yes, what?

MARTINE

They 've give me my dismission, sir.

CHRYSALE

Dismissed you?

MARTINE

Yes. The missus turned me off.

CHRYSALE

I won't have that. What for?

MARTINE

She threatened me
With more 'n a hundred blows, 'f I don't get out.

CHRYSALE

No, you shall stay; you 've done my work all right.
My wife gets in a temper now and then;
But I won't have her . . .

SCENE VI

PHILAMINTE, BELISE, CHRYSALE, MARTINE

PHILAMINTE, *seeing Martine*

What! still here, you hussy!
Quick, trollop, off with you; out of the house;
And don't let me set eyes on you again.

CHRYSALE

Gently.

PHILAMINTE

No, 't is too much.

CHRYSALE

Eh!

PHILAMINTE

Off with her!

CHRYSALE

But what 's she done to make you want to . . .?

PHILAMINTE

What!

Do you uphold her?

CHRYSALE

Oh, no, no, by no means.

PHILAMINTE

You take her part against me?

CHRYSALE

Dear me, no!
I only just was asking what she 'd done.

PHILAMINTE

Should I dismiss her without proper reason?

CHRYSALE

I don't say that; but we should treat our servants . . .

PHILAMINTE

No; she shall leave this house, I tell you that.

CHRYSALE

Well, well! Of course. Did anyone object?

PHILAMINTE

I 'll have no opposition to my wishes.

CHRYSALE

Of course not.

PHILAMINTE

You, like any decent husband,
Should share my anger, and take sides against her.

CHRYSALE

Why, so I do. (*Apart, to Martine*) Yes, yes, my wife is right
To turn you off, you jade. You don't deserve
The slightest mercy.

MARTINE

What 've I done?

CHRYSALE, *aside*

My word,
I don't know.

PHILAMINTE

She is capable of thinking
That it was nothing.

CHRYSALE

Did she rouse your wrath
By breaking things—a mirror—or some china?

PHILAMINTE

Should I dismiss her? And do you imagine
I could get angry for so slight a matter?

CHRYSALE, *to Martine*

What does she mean? (*To Philaminte*) The thing 's
important then?

PHILAMINTE

Of course it is. Am I unreasonable?

CHRYSALE

Has she through carelessness, perhaps, allowed
Some silver plate, or ewer, to be stolen?

PHILAMINTE

That would be nothing.

CHRYSALE, *to Martine*

Oh! so ho, my girl!
(*To Philaminte*)
What! did you find that she had been unfaithful?

PHILAMINTE

Far worse than that.

CHRYSALE

Far worse than that!

PHILAMINTE

Far worse.

CHRYSALE, *to Martine*

The deuce! You baggage! (*To Philaminte*) What! did she commit . . . ?

PHILAMINTE

She, with incomparable insolence,
And after thirty lessons, shocked my ear
By usage of a low and vulgar word
Condemned, in plainest terms, by Vaugelas.[1]

CHRYSALE

Is that . . . ?

PHILAMINTE

What! Always, spite of our remonstrance,
Offend the very basis of all science,
Grammar, which even rules o'er kings and princes!
And with high hand subjects them to its laws!

CHRYSALE

I thought her guilty of the worst of crimes!

PHILAMINTE

What! don't you think this crime unpardonable?

CHRYSALE

Yes, yes.

[1] See the Introductory Note, p. 362.

PHILAMINTE

I 'd like to see you dare condone it.

CHRYSALE

Heaven forbid!

BELISE

'T is true, 't is pitiful.
When she 's a hundred times been taught the laws
Of speech, to see her murder all constructions!

MARTINE

I 'm sure your preachments all are fine and good;
But I can 't talk your jargon, if I would.

PHILAMINTE

Impudent jade! to call that language jargon
That 's founded upon reason and good usage.

MARTINE

It 's speaking well, if you are understood;
All your fine words don't never do no good.

PHILAMINTE

There! listen, will you, to her style again!
Don't never do no good!

BELISE

Indocile brain!
Can 't you, with all our everlasting care,
Be taught to speak befittingly! But there!
You have backslidden to *not*, *never*, *no*.
It is too many negatives, by two.

MARTINE

Lud save us! I hain't studied, same as you;
I talks straight off, the way my own folks do.

PHILAMINTE

Can one endure it?

BELISE

What a solecism!

PHILAMINTE

It kills a delicate ear!

BELISE

Materialism
Quite rules your genius, it must be averred!
I, is first person, notice; *talks* is third.
Why will you outrage grammar all your life?

MARTINE

Who wants to outrage gram'ma, eh? or gran'pa?

PHILAMINTE

O heavens!

BELISE

You mistake the sense of *grammar;*
I 've told you whence that word comes, have I not?

MARTINE

Faith, let it come from Cork or Tipperary,
That 's naught to me.

BELISE

Oh! what a clownish soul!
Grammar, I tell you, teaches us the laws
Of verb and subject, adjective and noun.

MARTINE

Well, all I say is, I don't know those gentry.

PHILAMINTE

What martyrdom!

BELISE

Those are the names of words;
And we must see to making them agree.

MARTINE

Let 'em agree, or fight it out, who cares?

PHILAMINTE, *to Bélise*

Ah! heavens! let 's have done with such discussion.
(*To Chrysale*)
Now will you send her packing, sir, or won't you?

CHRYSALE

Yes, yes. (*Aside*) I must give in to her caprice.
(*To Martine*)
There, there; don't vex her; you 'd best go, Martine.

PHILAMINTE

What! You 're afraid to hurt the hussy's feelings!
You speak so meek and mild, to send her off!

CHRYSALE

I? Not at all. (*Roughly*) Be off!
(*Gently, aside to Martine*)
There, go, poor child.

SCENE VII

PHILAMINTE, CHRYSALE, BELISE

CHRYSALE

There! Now you 're satisfied, and she is gone;
But I do not at all approve such doings;

The girl is fit for what she has to do,
And you 've dismissed her for a silly trifle.

PHILAMINTE

And would you have me keep her in my service,
To put my ears forever to the torture,
To break all laws of usage and of reason
By countless barbarisms in her speech,
And mangled phrases, patched up here and there
With proverbs from the gutters of the market?

BELISE

'T is true, it makes you sweat to hear her talk;
She tears poor Vaugelas to shreds each day;
The mildest sins of this gross intellect
Are pleonasm, or else cacophony.

CHRYSALE

What matter if she fails in Vaugelas,
Provided that her cooking does n't fail?
I 'd rather have her, while she cleans her salad,
Make verbs and subjects disagree, and say
Some low or vulgar word a hundred times,
Than burn my roast or over-salt my broth.
I live on well-cooked food, and not fine language.
Your Vaugelas can't teach to make a soup;
Balzac, Malherbe, so learned in fine words,
Might well have proved but blockheads in the kitchen.

PHILAMINTE

How grossly shocking is this low discourse!
And how unworthy of what bears the name
Of man, to stoop to such material cares,
Instead of rising to the realms of spirit!

Of what importance is this rag, the body,
That it should merit even a passing thought?
And ought we not to leave it far beneath us?

CHRYSALE

My body, that 's myself; I mean to care for 't.
Rag, if you please; my rag is dear to me.

BELISE

The body, *with* the spirit, has its place,
Brother; but if you 'll trust the learned world,
The spirit must take precedence thereof;
And so our greatest care, our first endeavour,
Must be to feed the mind on sweets of science.

CHRYSALE

Faith, if you ever feed your mind at all,
From what I hear, it is with airy diet;
You have no care, and no solicitude
To . . .

PHILAMINTE

Oh! *solicitude* offends my ear;
'T is rank; it stinks of its antiquity.[1]

BELISE

'T is true the word is terribly old-fashioned.

CHRYSALE

You let me tell you—I must have my say,
Throw down the mask for once, and vent my spleen:
Folk treat you both as daft, and I 'm disgusted . . .

PHILAMINTE

How now, sir?

[1] See the Introductory Note, p. 362.

CHRYSALE, *to Bélise*

Sister, 't is to you I 'm talking.
The slightest impropriety in speech
Rouses your wrath; but you commit some strange ones
In conduct. Now, your everlasting books
Don't suit me. Just save out a big old Plutarch
To press my neck-bands in, and burn the rest.
Leave learning to the Doctors of the town;
And throw away, if you 'd be sensible,
That great long frightful spy-glass in our attic,
And scores of other ugly-looking gimcracks;
Don't be so keen to see what 's done i' the moon,
But mind a bit what 's doing in your house
Where everything goes topsy-turvy. No,
It is n't decent, and for many reasons,
That womankind should study, and know so much.
To teach her children what is right and wrong,
Manage her household, oversee her servants,
And keep expenses within bounds, should be
Her only study and philosophy.
Our fathers, on this point, showed great good sense;
They said a woman always knows enough
If but her range of understanding reaches
To telling, one from t' other, coat and breeches.
Their wives, who could n't read, led honest lives;
Their households were their only learned theme,
And all their books were thimble, thread, and needles,
With which they made their daughters' wedding outfits.
But now our women scorn to live like that;
They want to write, and all be authoresses.
They think no knowledge is too deep for them.

Here in my house, it 's worse than anywhere;
The loftiest secrets are discovered here,
And everything is known, except what should be.
They know the movements of the moon, of Venus,
Saturn, the Polar Star—much good to me!—
And with this useless knowledge, fetched so far,
They don't know how my pot boils, when I need it.
My servants, too, aspire to learning now,
And all do everything but what they should do.
Now all my house makes reasoning its business,
And reasoning has banished reason hence!
One burns my roast, while reading some old rubbish;
Another moons at poetry, when I
Call for a drink; in short they ape your model,
And I have servants, but am never served.
Just one poor wench was left, who was n't tainted
With this infectious atmosphere; and now
You turn her off, with mighty fuss and fuming,
Because, forsooth, she can't talk Vaugelas.
I tell you, sister—for it is to you
I speak—that all these goings-on offend me.
I don't like all your Latin-mongers here,
And least of all, this Mister Trissotin.
His verses make you ludicrous in public,
And all his talk is utter stuff and nonsense.
You wonder what he 's said, when he 's done speaking;
And for my part, I think his brain is addled.

PHILAMINTE

What low vulgarity of soul and language!

BELISE

Was ever grosser aggregate of atoms?
A mind composed of molecules more common?

Is 't possible our race and blood 's the same?
It makes me hate myself, and hide for shame.

SCENE VIII

PHILAMINTE, CHRYSALE

PHILAMINTE

Well! Have you any other shots to fire?

CHRYSALE

I? No, no. We won't quarrel; let it pass.
Let 's talk of something else. Your eldest daughter
Feels some distaste, it seems, for matrimony;
She 's a philosopher . . . I find no fault;
You 've brought her up yourself, and done quite right;
But now, her sister shows a different humour;
And so I think, we 'd better settle her,
And choose a husband . . .

PHILAMINTE

I have thought of that,
And now will let you know what I 've decided.
This Mister Trissotin, who lacks the honour
Of your esteem, and whom you rate us with,
Is just the one I 've chosen for her husband;
And I can weigh his merits more exactly
Than you. Discussion is superfluous;
I 've settled every point about the matter.
You need n't tell her of my choice, however;
I mean to speak to her about it first.
My arguments are sure to bring her round,
And I shall know it if you 've interfered.

SCENE IX

ARISTE, CHRYSALE

ARISTE

Well, brother, so your wife has gone, I see;
You 've had a talk with her?

CHRYSALE

Yes.

ARISTE

What 's the outcome?
Shall we have Henriette? Does she consent?
And is it settled?

CHRYSALE

Not entirely, yet.

ARISTE

Does she refuse?

CHRYSALE

No.

ARISTE

Does she hesitate?

CHRYSALE

Oh, not at all!

ARISTE

What then?

CHRYSALE

For son-in-law
She offers me another man.

ARISTE

Another

For son-in-law?

CHRYSALE

Another.

ARISTE

And his name is?

CHRYSALE

Is Mister Trissotin.

ARISTE

What! Mister Tris . . .

CHRYSALE

Yes, he that 's always talking verse and Latin.

ARISTE

Did you accept him?

CHRYSALE

I? No, God forbid!

ARISTE

You answered . . . ?

CHRYSALE

Nothing; and I 'm glad, because
In that way I did not commit myself.

ARISTE

A noble reason! That 's a great step gained.
Did you at least suggest Clitandre to her?

CHRYSALE

No; when I found her talking of another,
I thought it best to take no risks.

ARISTE

Your prudence
Is truly precious to the last degree!
Have you no shame, to be so poor in spirit?
How can a man be weak and base enough
To let his wife have absolute control
And never dare oppose her resolutions?

CHRYSALE

Dear me! 't is very well for you to talk,
But you don't know how I dislike a quarrel.
I love repose, and peace, and quietness,
And I 've a wife that 's awful in her tantrums;
She makes great boast of her philosophy,
But she 's no less a termagant for that;
Her high ideals, despising earthly trifles,
Do not abate her bitterness of temper.
Show the least opposition to her fancies,
You have a frightful tempest for a week;
She makes me tremble soon as she begins;
I don't know where to hide, she 's such a dragon;
And yet, for all her devilish disposition,
I have to call her "sweetheart" and "my dearie."

ARISTE

Come, this is nonsense. Between you and me,
Your wife controls you through your cowardice.
Her strength is founded only on your weakness;
It is from you she gets the name of master;
You yield to her high-handedness, and let

Yourself be led around like any donkey.
Can't you resolve to be a man for once,
To force a woman to accept your will,
And have the heart to say, once: *That 's my pleasure!*
What! will you let them sacrifice your daughter
To those mad follies that they 're all possessed with
And let your wealth adorn a nincompoop
For some few Latin words he makes parade of?—
A pedant, whom your wife apostrophises
As "flower of wit" and "great philosopher"
And "genius unapproached in gallant verse";
And who in fact is anything but that,
As everybody knows! Once more, 't is shameful;
Your base compliance makes you ludicrous.

CHRYSALE

Yes, yes, that 's true, I see I 'm in the wrong.
Come, come, we must pluck up some courage, brother.

ARISTE

Well said.

CHRYSALE

It is an infamous thing to be
So subject to a woman's tyranny.

ARISTE

Good!

CHRYSALE

She 's abused my gentleness too long.

ARISTE

Quite true.

CHRYSALE

She 's done my kindness too much wrong.

ARISTE

No doubt on 't.

CHRYSALE

But I 'll let her know to-day
My daughter 's mine, and I will have my way,
And wed her to a man who pleases me.

ARISTE

You 're in the right now, as I 'd have you be.

CHRYSALE

Brother, you 'll see Clitandre—for you know where
He lives; I pray you straightway send him here

ARISTE

I 'll go at once.

CHRYSALE

Too long I 've borne these evils;
I 'll be a man, now, spite of men and devils.

ACT III

SCENE I

PHILAMINTE, ARMANDE, BELISE, TRISSOTIN, LEPINE

PHILAMINTE

Ah! let 's sit down and listen at our ease
To lines that must be balanced word by word.

ARMANDE

I burn to see them.

BELISE

We are dying for them.

PHILAMINTE, *to Trissotin*

Whatever comes from you is my delight.

ARMANDE

To me, 't is an incomparable treat.

BELISE

'T is a delicious banquet to my ears.

PHILAMINTE

Don't let our hot desires grow faint with longing.

ARMANDE

Make haste!

BELISE

Be quick, and bring to us our rapture.

PHILAMINTE

Offer your epigram to our impatience.

TRISSOTIN, *to Philaminte*

Ah! madam, 't is a little new-born babe;
Its case must surely touch your heart; just now
I was delivered of it in your courtyard.

PHILAMINTE

To love it, I have but to know its father.

TRISSOTIN

And your approval plays the mother to it.

BELISE

What wealth of wit!

SCENE II

HENRIETTE, PHILAMINTE, BELISE, ARMANDE, TRISSOTIN, LEPINE

PHILAMINTE, *to Henriette, who, seeing the company, turns to go*

Come here! Why run away?

HENRIETTE

Not to disturb such intimate discourse.

PHILAMINTE

Approach, and come, with all your ears, to share
The joy of listening to miracles.

HENRIETTE

I don't know much about fine points in writing;
Things of the mind are not my forte.

PHILAMINTE

No matter;
Besides, I mean to tell you afterward
A secret you should know of.

TRISSOTIN, *to Henriette*

Learning, madam,
Has little to attract you; all the knowledge
That you need boast, is knowing how to charm.

HENRIETTE

As little one as t' other; I 've no wish . . .

BELISE

Ah! let us not forget the new-born babe.

PHILAMINTE, *to Lépine*

Quick, boy, bring up the chairs.

(*Lépine falls, with the chair he is bringing.*)

Impertinent lout!
What right have you to fall, when you 've been taught
The principles of equilibrium?

BELISE

Fool, don't you see the reason of your falling:
Namely, that you removed the point we call
Centre of gravity, from o'er the base?

LEPINE

Madam, I noticed it—when I was down.

PHILAMINTE, *to Lépine, as he goes*

Booby!

TRISSOTIN

Good thing for him he 's not of glass.

ARMANDE

Wit every moment!

BELISE

Never running dry!

(*They all sit down.*)

PHILAMINTE

Serve us at once your exquisite repast.

TRISSOTIN

For this great hunger that you manifest,
A single course of eight lines seems but little;
I think I might do well to reinforce
The epigram—or madrigal—by adding
The relish of a sonnet, which a certain
Princess esteemed quite delicate; 't is seasoned
Throughout with Attic salt, and you will find,
I think, that it is really rather tasty.

ARMANDE

Ah! I am sure of that.

PHILAMINTE

Quick, let us hear.

BELISE, *interrupting him each time he starts to read*

I feel my heart leap up for joy beforehand . . .
I do love poetry quite to distraction . . .
Especially when gallantly expressed . . .

PHILAMINTE

If we keep talking, he can't say a word.

TRISSOTIN

Son . . .

BELISE, *to Henriette*

Niece, be silent.

TRISSOTIN

SONNET: TO PRINCESS URANIE, UPON HER FEVER[1]

Your prudence sleepeth, by my fay,
To treat so fair and splendidly
And lodge in state luxuriously
Your foe that lies in wait to slay.

BELISE

A lovely opening!

ARMANDE

How gallantly
'T is turned!

PHILAMINTE

For lighter verse, he stands alone.

ARMANDE

There 's no resisting his *Your prudence sleepeth.*

BELISE

To lodge her foe is full of charms for me.

PHILAMINTE

I love *luxuriously* and *splendidly;*
Two adverbs rhymed together; so effective!

[1] Taken literally from Abbé Cotin's works. See Introductory Note.

BELISE

Let 's listen to the rest.

TRISSOTIN

Your prudence sleepeth, by my fay,
To treat so fair and splendidly
And lodge in state luxuriously
Your foe that lies in wait to slay.

ARMANDE

Prudence asleep!

BELISE

To lodge her foe!

PHILAMINTE

Luxuriously and *splendidly!*

TRISSOTIN

Send her away, whate'er they say,
From your rich lodging presently;
Th' ungrateful wretch most shamelessly
Doth make your lovely life her prey.

BELISE

Ah! gently! Give me breathing-space, I beg you.

ARMANDE

Oh! grant us, please, a moment to admire.

PHILAMINTE

These verses thrill you to the inmost soul,
With some strange feeling that quite makes you faint.

ARMANDE

Send her away, whate'er they say,
From your rich lodging presently.

How well that lovely phrase, *rich lodging*, fits!
How skilfully the metaphor is chosen!

PHILAMINTE

Send her away, whate'er they say—
Whate'er they say is in such perfect taste!
I think that passage altogether priceless.

ARMANDE

Yes, I 'm in love too, with *whate'er they say*.

BELISE

Yes, I think, too, *whate'er they say* is happy.

ARMANDE

I wish I 'd written it.

BELISE

'T is worth whole poems.

PHILAMINTE

But do you feel its finer shades of meaning,
As I do?

ARMANDE and BELISE

Oh! Oh! Oh!

PHILAMINTE

Whate'er they say—
No matter who may take the fever's part,
Pay no attention, never mind their babble,
Send her away, whate'er they say,
Whate'er they say, whate'er they say.
Whate'er they say says much more than it seems to.
I 'm not quite sure if others feel with me;
But in that phrase I find a million meanings.

BELISE

'T is true it says more things than it seems big with.

PHILAMINTE, *to Trissotin*

But when you wrote that grand *whate'er they say*,
Did you yourself, then, fully feel its power?
Had you in mind, then, all it means to us?
And did you know you 'd put such genius in it?

TRISSOTIN

Eh! eh!

ARMANDE

I can't forget *th' ungrateful wretch*,
The fever, that ungrateful, low-bred creature,
That injures those by whom 't is entertained.

PHILAMINTE

In fine, the quatrains both are wonderful.
I beg you, let us hear the tercets straightway.

ARMANDE

Oh—but once more, please, read *whate'er they say*.

TRISSOTIN

Send her away, whate'er they say—

PHILAMINTE, ARMANDE, and BELISE

Whate'er they say!

TRISSOTIN

From your rich lodging presently—

PHILAMINTE, ARMANDE, and BELISE

Rich lodging!

TRISSOTIN

Th' ungrateful wretch most shamelessly—

PHILAMINTE, ARMANDE, and BELISE

The ungrateful wretch, the fever!

TRISSOTIN

Doth make your lovely life her prey.

PHILAMINTE

Your lovely life!

ARMANDE and BELISE

Ah!

TRISSOTIN

What, shall so rude a creature dare
Touch noble blood, and rank so fair—

PHILAMINTE, ARMANDE, and BELISE

Ah!

TRISSOTIN

And night and day insult you so!
If to the baths you chance to go,
Then seize her, without more ado,
In your own hands, and drown her there.

PHILAMINTE

I faint.

BELISE

I swoon.

ARMANDE

I 'm dying with delight.

PHILAMINTE

It thrills you with a thousand gentle shivers.

ARMANDE

If to the baths you chance to go—

BELISE

Then seize her, without more ado—

PHILAMINTE

In your own hands, and drown her there.
There drown her, in the bath, with your own hands.

ARMANDE

Each step, in lines like yours, shows special beauties.

BELISE

And everywhere one walks, is sheer delight.

PHILAMINTE

One cannot tread save on the fairest flowers.

ARMANDE

'T is little garden-paths all strewn with roses.

TRISSOTIN

You think the sonnet . . .

PHILAMINTE

Admirable, novel;
Nothing so fine was ever done before.

BELISE, *to Henriette*

What! no emotion during such a reading!
Therein you play a sorry part, my niece!

HENRIETTE

Each plays the part he can in this our world,
My aunt; and one can 't be a wit at will.

TRISSOTIN

Perhaps my verses bore the lady.

HENRIETTE

No.

I did n't listen.

PHILAMINTE

Oh!—but let us see

The epigram.

TRISSOTIN

On a Red Coach, Offered to a Lady, his Friend

PHILAMINTE

His titles always have a special savour.

ARMANDE

They 're new, and promise wit untold to follow.

TRISSOTIN

Love sells his bonds to me at such a rate . . .

PHILAMINTE, ARMANDE, and BELISE

Oh!

TRISSOTIN

They 've cost already half of my estate;
But when this handsome coach you see,
Which I have offered to my dear,
So rich with gold and blazonry
That all the country far and near

With one accord acclaims it loudly,
The while my Laïs triumphs proudly . . .

PHILAMINTE

My Laïs! Ah! There 's erudition. Listen!

BELISE

The euphemism is good; 't is worth a million.

TRISSOTIN

So rich with gold and blazonry
That all the country far and near
With one accord acclaims it loudly,
The while my Laïs triumphs proudly,
Say not 't is red, or even offerèd,
But say, it has reduced me to a red!

ARMANDE

Oh! oh! the point 's entirely unexpected.

PHILAMINTE

There 's none but he can write with such a taste.

BELISE

Say not 't is red, or even offerèd,
But say, it has reduced me to a red.
Why, there 's the whole declension, don't you see?
First, *red*, then *of a red*, then *to a red.*

PHILAMINTE

I don't know whether, since the day we met,
I 've had some prepossession in your favour;
But I admire alike your verse and prose.

TRISSOTIN, *to Philaminte*

If you would show us something of your own,
We too could take our turn at admiration.

PHILAMINTE

I 've not been writing verse; but very soon
I hope to show you, confidentially,
Eight chapters of the plan I 'm drawing up
For our Academy. For Plato merely
Sketched a bare outline, in his famous treatise
Of the Republic; I shall carry out
The thought in full, and am arranging it
In prose. For I am vexed beyond endurance
To see the wrong men do our intellects;
And I shall soon avenge us, one and all,
For being ranked as an inferior class,
Having our talents limited to trifles,
And doors to higher wisdom closed against us.

ARMANDE

It wrongs our sex too grossly, to confine
The range of our intelligence to judging
The fashion of a petticoat or cape,
The beauties of mere lace, or new brocade.

BELISE

Yes, we must rise above this shameful lot,
And boldly show our mind has come of age.

TRISSOTIN

'T is fully known how I respect the ladies;
How, while I pay my homage to their beauty,
I honour too the brilliance of their mind.

PHILAMINTE

Our sex, too, does you justice on that point;
But we would prove to certain gentlemen
Whose haughty learning treats us with contempt,

That women too are capable of knowledge;
That they, like men, can hold a learned conclave,
And manage it far better than the men;
That they 'll unite what 's elsewhere put asunder,
Wed letters with the abstract sciences,[1]
Discover Nature's secrets in a thousand
Experiments, and, on all doubtful questions,
Admit all schools, and not be bound to any.

TRISSOTIN

For order, I must hold with Aristotle.

PHILAMINTE

But for abstractions, I love Plato too.

ARMANDE

I 'm fond of Epicurus, for the dogma.

BELISE

I 've taken a great fancy, now, to atoms;
But vacuum I really can't accept,
And very much prefer the tenuous matter.

TRISSOTIN

Descartes, on magnetism, quite agrees
With me.

ARMANDE

I love his vortices.

PHILAMINTE

And I
His falling worlds.

[1] Alluding to the establishment in 1666 of the *Académie des Sciences*, in addition to the *Académie française*, which had been founded in 1635. On the following lines, see Introductory Note, pp. 359, 360.

ARMANDE

I long to see our meetings
Opened, and some discovery announced.

TRISSOTIN

We augur many from your wondrous insight;
Little in Nature can be dark to you.

PHILAMINTE

I, not to boast, have lately made one; for
I 've seen men, plainly, in the moon.

BELISE

I think
I 've not seen men there yet; but I have seen
Two church-towers, just as plain as I see you.

ARMANDE

We 'll sound the depths of grammar, history,
Verse, ethics, politics, as well as physics.

PHILAMINTE

Ethics has features that I quite adore,
'T was formerly the passion of great minds;
But to the Stoics I award the palm,
Their Wise Man is the noblest thing I know of.

ARMANDE

On language, too, we soon shall publish rules
By which we mean to work great transformations.
Through some antipathy, that 's either reason
Or instinct, we 've conceived a deadly hatred,
Each one of us, to many verbs and nouns,
And have, in deference to each other, passed

Sentence of death upon them; we shall open
Our learned meetings, by proscribing all
These words, of which we 'll purge both prose and verse.

PHILAMINTE

The finest plan of our Academy,
A noble enterprise, which I 'm in love with,
And which is sure to bring us fame and praise
From noble minds, through all posterity,
Is to cut out those filthy syllables
Which in the best of words produce a scandal—
Those favourite toys of fools in every age,
Insipid platitudes of sorry jesters,
Sources of countless shameful double-meanings
By which a lady's modesty is outraged.[1]

TRISSOTIN

These certainly are admirable projects!

BELISE

Yes; you shall see our statutes when they 're finished.

TRISSOTIN

They 'll surely be all beautiful and wise.

ARMANDE

We, by our laws, shall judge of all new works;
We 'll rule both prose and verse, whatever 's writ;
Except our friends and us, none shall have wit;
We 'll spy out faults in everything, and find
None but ourselves to write in style refined.

[1] See the Introductory Note, p. 362.

SCENE III

PHILAMINTE, BELISE, ARMANDE, HENRIETTE, TRISSOTIN, LEPINE

LEPINE, *to Trissotin*

Sir, there 's a man that wants to speak with you;
He 's dressed in black, and has a gentle voice.
(*All rise.*)

TRISSOTIN

It is that learned friend, who urged me so
To honour him by making him acquainted
With you.

PHILAMINTE

You 've every right to introduce him.

(*Trissotin goes to meet Vadius.*)

SCENE IV

PHILAMINTE, BELISE, ARMANDE, HENRIETTE

PHILAMINTE, *to Armande and Bélise*

Let 's do aright the honours of our learning.

(*To Henriette, who starts to go*)

Here! Have n't I informed you, clearly too,
That I shall want you?

HENRIETTE

But what for?

PHILAMINTE

Come here;
You shall be told about it presently.

SCENE V

TRISSOTIN, VADIUS, PHILAMINTE, BELISE, ARMANDE, HENRIETTE

TRISSOTIN, *introducing Vadius*

Here is a man that 's dying with desire
To see you. In presenting him, I feel
No fear of having brought you one profane.
He holds his own among our finest wits.

PHILAMINTE

The hand presenting him proclaims his worth.

TRISSOTIN

He 's learned in the ancient authors, and
Knows Greek as well as any man in France.

PHILAMINTE, *to Bélise*

Knows Greek! O heavens! Greek! He knows Greek, sister!

BELISE, *to Armande*

Ah! Greek, niece, he knows Greek!

ARMANDE

Greek! Oh, how sweet!

PHILAMINTE

What! you know Greek? Oh, I beseech you, sir,
Allow me to embrace you, for the love
Of Greek.

(*Vadius embraces and kisses them all, till he comes to Henriette, who refuses.*)

HENRIETTE

Excuse me, sir, I don't know Greek.

(*All sit down.*)

PHILAMINTE

I have a marvellous respect for books
In Greek.

VADIUS

I fear that I 'm importunate
In coming now to pay my homage, madam,
And breaking in upon your learned converse.

PHILAMINTE

You could not be importunate, with Greek.

TRISSOTIN

Besides, he is a master both in prose
And verse, and if he would, might show us something.

VADIUS

The common failing of our authors is
To show their works, and tyrannise the talk;
In the court-galleries and promenades,
At dinner, in the boudoir, they are still
The tireless readers of their tiresome verses.
To my mind, there is nothing more absurd
Than authors begging incense everywhere,
Who, buttonholing anyone they meet,
Make him the martyr of their lucubrations.
I never yield to this insistent folly,
But hold with the opinion of a Greek,
Who, by express command, bids wise men shun
Unworthy forwardness to read their works.

Here is a little poem for young lovers,
On which I should be glad of your opinion.

TRISSOTIN

Your lines have beauties which all others lack.

VADIUS

Venus and all the Graces reign in yours.

TRISSOTIN

Your choice of words is good, your phrasing easy.

VADIUS

Pathos and *ethos* permeate your writings.

TRISSOTIN

Your eclogues have a style that quite surpasses
In sweetness Virgil and Theocritus.

VADIUS

Your odes have such a noble gallant charm
As leaves old Horace very far behind you.

TRISSOTIN

Is aught so amorous as your little love-songs?

VADIUS

Can anything be found to match your sonnets?

TRISSOTIN

Or anything so dear as your *rondeaux?*

VADIUS

Or aught so witty as your madrigals?

TRISSOTIN

Ballades are your most admirable talent.

VADIUS

You are adorable in crambo-verse.

TRISSOTIN

If France could only recognise your merit—

VADIUS

If but our age did justice to true genius—

TRISSOTIN

You 'd have a gilded coach to ride abroad in.

VADIUS

Statues would be erected to your honour.
Ahem! BALLADE . . . (*To Trissotin*) I hope you 'll
be quite frank
In . . .

TRISSOTIN, *to Vadius*

Have you seen a certain little sonnet,
Upon the Princess Uranie, her fever?

VADIUS

Yes. Only yesterday I heard it read.

TRISSOTIN

You know who wrote it?

VADIUS

No. But I can tell him
That—not to flatter him—his sonnet 's rubbish.

TRISSOTIN

Still, many people think it excellent.

VADIUS

That can 't prevent its being pitiful;
And if you 've read it, you 'll agree with me.

TRISSOTIN

'T is mighty certain I shall not. I 'm sure
Few men are capable of such a sonnet.

VADIUS

Heaven forbid my ever writing such!

TRISSOTIN

No better could be written, I maintain;
And with abundant reason—for I wrote it.

VADIUS

You?

TRISSOTIN

I.

VADIUS

Then I don't understand the matter.

TRISSOTIN

The matter is, I 'd not the luck to please you.

VADIUS

I must have listened inattentively,
Or else the reader must have spoiled the sonnet.
Enough of this; let 's come to my *ballade*.

TRISSOTIN

Ballades are to my taste insipid stuff;
Their fashion 's past; they smack of ancient date.

VADIUS

Ballades do none the less please many people.

TRISSOTIN

That can't prevent them from displeasing me.

VADIUS

They may be none the worse for that, however.

TRISSOTIN

For pedants, they may still have wondrous charm.

VADIUS

And yet we find they have no charm for you.

TRISSOTIN

You most ineptly lend your faults to others.
(*All rise.*)

VADIUS

You most impertinently lend me yours.

TRISSOTIN

Go to, you petty scribbler, paper-blotter!

VADIUS

You poetaster, shame of our profession!

TRISSOTIN

Rag-picker of Parnassus, plagiarist!

VADIUS

Old pedagogue . . . !

PHILAMINTE

Eh! sirs, what can you mean?

TRISSOTIN, *to Vadius*

Go, go pay back those shameful larcenies
The Greek and Roman authors claim from you.

VADIUS

Go, go do public penance on Parnassus
For mutilating Horace in your verses.

TRISSOTIN

Think of your book, how little stir it made.

VADIUS

Think of your publisher, sent to the poor-house.

TRISSOTIN

My fame stands firm ; in vain you try to rend it.

VADIUS

Yes, yes, go ask the author of the *Satires.*[1]

TRISSOTIN

Eh ! you go ask him too !

VADIUS

I' m pleased to find
That he has treated me more honourably.
He gives me just a passing thrust, among
A host of writers whom the book-shops honour,
But never in his lines leaves you at peace ;
You are the constant butt of his attacks.

TRISSOTIN

Thereby I hold a nobler rank than you do.
He leaves you with the crowd, a petty scribbler ;

[1] See the Introductory Note, p. 360.

He thinks one blow was quite enough to crush you,
And has not judged you worthy of a second.
But me he singles out, a noble foeman,
Against whom he must use his utmost effort,
And blow on blow, redoubled constantly,
Show that he 's never sure of victory.

VADIUS

My pen shall show you what a man am I.

TRISSOTIN

And mine shall make you recognise your master.

VADIUS

I challenge you in verse, prose, Greek, and Latin.

TRISSOTIN

We 'll meet in single fight at Barbin's book-shop.

SCENE VI

TRISSOTIN, PHILAMINTE, ARMANDE, BELISE, HENRIETTE

TRISSOTIN

I 'm sure you will not blame my passion, madam;
I but defend your judgment of the sonnet
Which he has dared audaciously attack.

PHILAMINTE

I 'll do my best to make it up between you;
But now for other things. Come, Henriette;
This long while I have been disturbed in mind
Because you show no intellect at all;
But I 've found means to furnish you with some.

HENRIETTE

This care for me is quite unnecessary;
Learned discourse is not my province, mother;

I like to take life easily ; in talk
'T is too much effort to be always brilliant ;
That 's an ambition I shall never cherish.
I am content, dear mother, to be stupid,
And much prefer to speak like common people
Rather than rack my brains for clever sayings.

PHILAMINTE

Yes ; but you do me wrong ; I am not willing
To suffer such disgrace in my own offspring.
Beauty of face is but a frail adornment,
A passing flower, a fading moment's pride,
And goes no deeper than the epidermis ;
But beauty of the mind is sure and lasting.
Therefore I long have sought some means to give you
This beauty which Time's sickle cannot harvest,
To plant in you the love of science, and
Inoculate you with the higher knowledge ;
So, finally, I 've settled on a plan :
'T is to unite you with a man of learning—

(*Pointing to Trissotin*)

This gentleman in short—whom you must now
Accept as one I 've chosen for your husband.

HENRIETTE

I, mother?

PHILAMINTE

Yes. Now play the ninny, do!

BELISE, *to Trissotin*

I understand ; your eyes ask my permission
For giving her a heart that 's mine. I grant it,

Consent, and yield you up to this new tie,
Because this marriage will assure your fortunes.

TRISSOTIN, *to Henriette*

I know not what to say, in my delight,
Madam; this match which I am honoured with
Makes me . . .

HENRIETTE

Eh! softly, sir. 'T is not concluded;
Do n't be in such a hurry.

PHILAMINTE

What an answer!
D' ye know that if . . . Enough; you follow me.
(*To Trissotin*)
She 'll hark to reason soon. Just let her be.

SCENE VII

HENRIETTE, ARMANDE

ARMANDE

What brilliant plans our mother has for you!
She could not choose a more illustrious husband.

HENRIETTE

If he 's so fine a choice, why don't you take him?

ARMANDE

It is to you, not me, his hand is given.

HENRIETTE

I give him up to you, since you 're my elder.

ARMANDE

If I, like you, were eager to be married,
I should accept your offer with delight.

HENRIETTE

If I, like you, had pedants on the brain,
I might consider him a proper husband.

ARMANDE

In any case, although our tastes may differ,
We owe obedience, sister, to our parents.
A mother has full right to govern us;
And you 'd be wrong to hope that by resisting . . .

SCENE VIII

CHRYSALE, ARISTE, CLITANDRE, HENRIETTE, ARMANDE

CHRYSALE, *to Henriette, presenting Clitandre*

Now, daughter, you must do as I 've determined.
Take off that glove. Here, put your hand in his,
And let your heart consider him henceforth
As one whom I 've decided you shall marry.

ARMANDE

In this case, sister, you are mighty willing.

HENRIETTE

We owe obedience to our parents, sister;
A father has full right to rule our wishes.

ARMANDE

A mother has some share in our obedience.

CHRYSALE

What 's that you say?

ARMANDE

I say I 'm much afraid
You and my mother don't agree in this;
And 't is another husband . . .

CHRYSALE

Hold your prate;
Go talk philosophy your stomach full
With her, and don't be meddling in my doings.
Tell her my mind, and give her proper warning
Not to come pestering my ears about it.
Go, quick, begone.

SCENE IX

CHRYSALE, ARISTE, HENRIETTE, CLITANDRE

ARISTE

Good, good! You're doing wonders.

CLITANDRE

Oh, joy! Oh, rapture! Ah! how kind is fortune!

CHRYSALE

Come, take her hand; after you, son-in-law;
Conduct her to her room. (*To Ariste*) What sweet caresses!
Their love makes this old heart of mine beat faster,
It quite cheers up my late declining years,
And makes me think of my young love-affairs.

ACT IV

SCENE I

PHILAMINTE, ARMANDE

ARMANDE

No, nothing made her hesitate a moment;
She made parade of her obedience,
And scarcely waited to receive the order
Before she yielded,—seeming less to follow
A father's will, than to defy her mother's.

PHILAMINTE

I 'll show her to whose orders of the two
The laws of reason make her wishes subject,
And which should rule, her mother or her father,
The spirit or the body, form or matter.

ARMANDE

The least that they could do, was to consult you;
This little gentleman behaves most oddly,
To want to be your son in your despite.

PHILAMINTE

He has n't yet attained to what he wants.
I thought his person pleasing and approved
His love for you; but never liked his ways . . .
He knows I write—thank Heaven!—yet never once
Begged me to read him any of my works.

SCENE II

CLITANDRE, *entering quietly, and listening unseen;* ARMANDE, PHILAMINTE

ARMANDE

I never would submit, if I were you,
To letting Henriette have him for husband.
Not that I care, of course; 't would wrong me greatly
If anyone should think I was concerned
About it, or suppose my heart could harbour
Resentment at the scurvy trick he 's played me.
Philosophy can fortify the soul
Against such strokes of fortune; through its help
We rise superior to everything.
But since he 's flouted you beyond endurance,
Honour demands that you oppose his suit;
Besides, I 'm sure the man could never please you.
I never knew him, in our talks together,
To show the least esteem for you.

PHILAMINTE

Poor fool!

ARMANDE

However wide your fame was spread abroad,
He always seemed to balk at praising you.

PHILAMINTE

Brute!

ARMANDE

Scores of times, I read your latest verses
As a great treat, and yet he did n't like them.

PHILAMINTE

Impudent dunce!

ARMANDE

We often disagreed,
And you would not believe what insolent nonsense . . .

CLITANDRE, *to Armande*

Eh! gently, pray. A little charity,
Madam, or at the least some honesty.
What crime have I committed?—what offence
That you should arm your eloquence against me,
And try to ruin me, and make me hateful
To those whose favour I am most in need of?
Speak, tell us, whence this mighty indignation?
I 'll let your mother here be judge between us.

ARMANDE

Were I as angry as you try to prove me,
I 'd have sufficient cause to justify it.
You have deserved it richly; first love claims
Such sacred rights, that one should rather lose
Fortune and life, than feel another passion.
No crime 's so horrible as change in love;
Unfaithfulness is monstrous—ethically.

CLITANDRE

But, madam, do you call unfaithfulness
That which your heart 's cold pride enjoined upon me?
I merely did your bidding; if you feel
Offended, you have but that pride to blame.
At first your charms possessed my heart completely.
For two long years I burned with constant ardour;
There 's no assiduous care, respect, attention,
But what I duly laid it on your altar.
Yet all my love and all my suit were wasted;

They moved you not ; you scorned my dearest vows.
What you refused, I offer to another.
Consider, then. Is this my fault, or yours?
Am I in haste to change, or driven to it?
Do I abandon you, or am I banished?

ARMANDE

But do you call it scorn, sir, of your suit,
When I would free it from its baser part,
And would refine it to that purity
Which makes the beauty of the perfect love?
You cannot, for my sake, divorce your thoughts
Completely from the commerce of the senses!
You care not for the charms of that sweet union
Of souls, in which the bodies have no share!
You cannot love except with vulgar passion,
And all the train of gross material ties!
To feed the flame I 've set alight in you
You must have marriage, and what follows after!
How strange is such a love! how far removed
Are beauteous souls from such terrestrial flames!
The senses have no part in all their ardours;
Their fair white love would wed their hearts alone,
And leave the rest as base unworthy matter.
Their flame is pure and clear as fires celestial;
They sigh for naught but what 's respectable,
And never yield to any low desire.
There 's nothing mean or vile in what they seek for;
They love for love's sake, and for nothing else;
And since their love is wholly of the spirit,
They never even know they have a body.

CLITANDRE

But I am so unlucky as to know

That, by your leave, I have a body as well
As soul; I find it sticks so close upon me
That I can 't drop it ; Heaven has not taught me
The art of separating one from t' other
By abstract philosophical distinctions ;
For me, the soul and body go together.
I 'll grant that, as you say, there 's nothing finer
Than pure desires that seek the spirit only,
Union of heart, and unity of thought,
Quite disentangled from the ties of sense ;
But love like that is too abstract for me ;
I am, as you accuse me, somewhat earthly ;
I love with my whole self, and in return
I ask complete possession of the loved one.
That is no reason for such great reproaches ;
And, with all due respect to your fine feelings,
I find my method widely followed still,
And marriage, even, pretty much the fashion ;
It still is thought so fair and honourable
That even my bold desire to be your husband
Was hardly cause for you to feel insulted.

ARMANDE

Well, then, sir, well then, since you will not heed me
Since your brute instincts must be satisfied,
And since, to make you faithful in your love,
You must have bonds of flesh, corporeal chains—
If mother will consent, I 'll force myself
To yield, for your sake, to the thing in question.

CLITANDRE

Madam, it is too late ; your place is taken ;
If I returned to you, I should be guilty

Of grossly wronging her whose kindness gave me
Shelter and solace when your pride disdained me.

PHILAMINTE

But pray, sir, do you look for my consent,
In counting on that other marriage, tell me?
Has it not dawned on your conceptions, please,
That I 've another choice for Henriette?

CLITANDRE

Eh! madam, pray consider well that choice;
I beg you, spare me such an ignominy,
And don't condemn me to the shameful lot
Of having Mister Trissotin for rival.
Your love for wits, in setting you against me,
Could find me out no meaner adversary.
There are some men of wit, or even many,
Crowned by the time's bad taste with fame and honour;
But Mister Trissotin could hoodwink no one,
And every man does justice to his writings.
Save in this house, he 's valued everywhere
At his true worth; I 've been struck dumb with wonder
A score of times, to hear you crying up
Nonsense that you 'd disown had you composed it.

PHILAMINTE

If you esteem him less than we must do,
We see him with quite other eyes than you.

SCENE III

TRISSOTIN, PHILAMINTE, ARMANDE, CLITANDRE

TRISSOTIN, *to Philaminte*

Madam, I 've come to tell you wondrous tidings;

Last night we had the narrowest escape!
A world passed just beside us, fell across
Our vortex; if in passing it had struck us,
We had been dashed to pieces just like glass.[1]

PHILAMINTE

We 'll leave that subject till another time;
This gentleman would find no rhyme or reason
Therein; he boasts his love of ignorance,
And, even more, his scorn of wit and learning.

CLITANDRE

The facts demand a somewhat milder statement.
Madam, allow me to explain: I scorn
Only such wit and learning as pervert men.
These things are in themselves both fair and honest;
But I 'd far rather be an ignoramus
Than learned in the style of certain people.

TRISSOTIN

Now I maintain, that in no case whatever
Could anything, through learning, be perverted.

CLITANDRE

And I maintain that both in words and deeds
Learning may often make the greatest fools.

TRISSOTIN

A mighty paradox!

CLITANDRE

Though I 'm no wit,
I should not find it hard to prove, I 'm thinking.

[1] The Abbé Cotin had recently published a work entitled *Gallant Dissertation upon the Comet which appeared in December 1664 and January 1665.*

If arguments should fail, I 'm sure to find
Striking examples ready to support me.

TRISSOTIN

Some you might cite would hardly be conclusive.

CLITANDRE

I 'd not go far to find some to the purpose.

TRISSOTIN

Now I, for one, don't see your striking cases.

CLITANDRE

I do; in fact they stare me in the face.

TRISSOTIN

I 've always thought that it was ignorance
Which made great fools, not learning.

CLITANDRE

You were wrong.
There 's no fool like a learned fool, I warrant.

TRISSOTIN

Common opinion goes against your doctrine,
Since "fool" and "ignorant" are synonyms.

CLITANDRE

If you appeal to usage, then the likeness
Is closer, surely, between "fool" and "pedant."

TRISSOTIN

Folly appears untinctured in the one.

CLITANDRE

And study, in the other, adds to Nature.

TRISSOTIN

But knowledge, in itself, is high and noble!

CLITANDRE

But knowledge, in a coxcomb, turns to folly.

TRISSOTIN

You must find wondrous charms in ignorance,
To take up arms in its behalf so stoutly.

CLITANDRE

If ignorance has charmed me so, 't is only
Since I have met with certain men of learning.

TRISSOTIN

Those certain men of learning, did you know it,
Might prove more worthy men than certain others.

CLITANDRE

Yes, let those certain men of learning judge;
But still, those certain others might deny it.

PHILAMINTE, *to Clitandre*

I think, sir . . .

CLITANDRE

Good now, madam, cry you mercy.
This gentleman is strong enough without you;
I 'm overwhelmed by one such rough assailant;
And if I hold out still, 't is by retreating.

ARMANDE

But the insulting tone of each retort
Which you . . .

CLITANDRE

A new ally? I yield the battle.

PHILAMINTE

Such duels are allowed in conversation,
Provided there 's no personal offence.

CLITANDRE

Oh! Lord! no fear he 'll ever feel insulted.
No man in France can take a jest so well;
He 's had full many a sharper cut all ready,
And never has his pride done aught but laugh.

TRISSOTIN

'T is not surprising that in such a combat
This gentleman should take the side he does;
He 's much at court, that 's saying everything.
The court, we all know, does not care for learning.
It has good cause to favour ignorance;
So, as a courtier, he defends it also.

CLITANDRE

I see you have a fearful grudge against
The court; poor court!—to find that all you wits
Declaim against it daily, and reproach it
With all your disappointments, and berate it
For wretched taste, and blame your failures on it.
Allow me, Mister Trissotin, to tell you,
With due respect for your great name and standing,
That you 'd do well, you and your like, to take
A gentler tone in speaking of the court;
That, after all, the court is not so stupid
As all you scribbling gentry choose to think it;
That it has common-sense to guide its judgments;
That good taste, even, may be formed there, too;

And that its knowledge of the world surpasses,
The musty learning of mere pedantry.

TRISSOTIN

We see the kind of taste it forms, indeed, sir!

CLITANDRE

Wherein, sir, do you find its taste so bad?

TRISSOTIN

Wherein, sir? In that by their learning, sir,
Baldus and Rasius have done great honour
To France; yet all their merit, though so patent,
Wins no attention and no gifts from court.

CLITANDRE

I see where your shoe pinches; and how modest
You are in not including your own name;
So, not to drag it in, pray tell me, sir,
How have your learned heroes served their country?
What have their writings done for it, that they
Should charge the court with horrible injustice,
And go about complaining that it fails
To shed its gifts and favour on their learning?
The State has mighty need for such-like knowledge!
The court, great use for all the books they write!
Three beggars think, within their tiny brains,
That being now in print, and bound with calf,
They 've grown of great importance in the land;
That with their pens they shape the fate of nations;
That at the slightest rumour of their writings,
Pensions must rise in flocks and seek their roof-trees
That all the universe is gazing at them;
That everywhere their fame is spread abroad;
And that they 're wondrous prodigies of learning

Because they know what others said before them,
Because for thirty years they 've used their eyes
And ears, and spent ten thousand nights in cramming
Their skulls with Greek and Latin, loading up
Their brains with all the indiscriminate plunder
That lies about in old forgotten volumes:
Men that seem always drunken with their knowledge,
Whose only stock-in-trade is senseless gabble;
Men good for nothing, void of common-sense,
Ridiculous, importunate, and fit
To make mankind despise all wit and learning!

PHILAMINTE

Your heat is great, sir; and this violence
Shows Nature's workings in you very plainly.
For 't is your rival's presence rouses you . . .

SCENE IV

TRISSOTIN, PHILAMINTE, CLITANDRE, ARMANDE, JULIEN

JULIEN

The learned gentleman who called just now,
To whom I have the honour to be valet,
Exhorts you, madam, to peruse this note.

PHILAMINTE

Whatever great importance this may have,
Learn, friend, that 't is impertinent to come
And interrupt a conversation so;
And that you must address the servants first,
To be presented like a well-trained valet.

JULIEN

Madam, I 'll set that point down in my book.

PHILAMINTE, *reading*

"Trissotin boasts, madam, that he is to marry your daughter. Let me inform you that his philosophy aims only at your wealth, and that you will do well not to conclude this match till you have seen the poem I am composing against him. While that portrait, in which I shall depict him to you in his true colours, is preparing, I send you herewith Horace, Virgil, Terence, and Catullus, where you shall see noted in the margin all those passages which he has pillaged."

Here 's worth attacked by many enemies
To thwart the match that I have planned ; this malice
Bids me confound their envy by such action
As shall convince them that their ill-timed efforts
Have hastened the result they seek to hinder.

(*To Julien*)

Take back this luggage straightway to your master,
And tell him, that to prove how rarely precious
I find his noble counsels, and how worthy
Of being followed out, this very night
I 'll wed my daughter to this gentleman.

SCENE V

PHILAMINTE, ARMANDE, CLITANDRE

PHILAMINTE, *to Clitandre*

You, as a friend of all the family,
May, sir, be present at the ceremony ;
I 'm very happy to invite you to it.
Armande, you 'll send to fetch the notary,
And let your sister know about it all.

ARMANDE

There 'll be no need of letting sister know;
This gentleman will certainly not fail
To run at once and carry her the news,
And rouse her courage to rebel against you.

PHILAMINTE

We 'll see who has most influence upon her;
I 'll find a way to bring her to her duty.

SCENE VI

ARMANDE, CLITANDRE

ARMANDE

I 'm very sorry, sir, to see that things
Are not arranged exactly to your liking.

CLITANDRE

I 'll do my utmost, madam, to remove
That sorrow from your heart.

ARMANDE

I fear you 'll fail.

CLITANDRE

Perhaps this fear of yours may prove ungrounded.

ARMANDE

I hope so.

CLITANDRE

I am sure of it; and sure
Of your support.

ARMANDE

I 'll use my best endeavour.

CLITANDRE

And I shall feel due gratitude forever.

SCENE VII

CHRYSALE, ARISTE, HENRIETTE, CLITANDRE

CLITANDRE

Without your help, sir, I 'm in evil case;
Your wife rejects my suit; her mind 's made up
To have this Trissotin for son-in-law.

CHRYSALE

What maggot 's in her brain, and why the deuce
Should she pick out this Mister Trissotin?

ARISTE

It is his name, that almost rhymes with Latin,
Which wins him this advantage o'er his rival.

CLITANDRE

She means to marry them this very evening.

CHRYSALE

This evening?

CLITANDRE

Yes, this evening.

CHRYSALE

Then, this evening
I 'll marry you and Henriette, to thwart her.

CLITANDRE

The notary is summoned, for the contract.

CHRYSALE

I 'll send for him, to draw the proper contract.

CLITANDRE, *pointing to Henriette*

And this young lady's sister is to tell her
About the match for which she must be ready.

CHRYSALE

And I command, with full authority,
That she make ready for this other marriage.
I 'll show them whether anyone but me
Shall be the master, and lay down the law
In my own house. (*To Henriette*) We 'll soon be back; wait here.
Brother, you come with me; you too, my son.

HENRIETTE, *to Ariste*

Oh! keep him in this disposition, pray.

ARISTE

I 'll try to serve your love, in every way.

SCENE VIII

HENRIETTE, CLITANDRE

CLITANDRE

However great the help he means to give,
My best hope, madam, rests upon your love.

HENRIETTE

Of that, at least, you may be well assured.

CLITANDRE

With that support, I cannot but be happy.

HENRIETTE

You see to what a match they mean to force me.

CLITANDRE

If you still love me I can have no fear.

HENRIETTE

I 'll do my best to win our dear desire;
And if my efforts cannot make me yours
There 's still one refuge for my heart to fly to,
To save me from belonging to another.

CLITANDRE

Now Heaven forbid that I should ever need
Such proof from you that love is love indeed!

ACT V

SCENE I

HENRIETTE, TRISSOTIN

HENRIETTE

It is about the marriage which my mother
Is planning, that I wished to speak with you;
I thought, on seeing how our home 's disturbed,
That you might listen to my arguments.
I know that with my hand you hope to get
A good-sized property for marriage portion;
But money, which so many men esteem,
For true philosophers can have no charm;
Contempt of worldly goods and empty grandeur
Should not express itself in words alone.

TRISSOTIN

Precisely so; and wealth is not your charm
For me. Your brilliant beauty, soft bright eyes,
Your grace, your style, are property and riches
Which I am suing for, which I adore;
These are the only treasures I 'm in love with.

HENRIETTE

I 'm much beholden to your generous passion.
A love so flattering may well confound me,
And I am grieved, sir, that I can't return it.
I feel as high esteem for you as can be,
But there 's one hindrance to my loving you.

A heart, you know, can't serve two masters; mine,
I find, belongs completely to Clitandre.
I know his merit is far less than yours;
I know I have poor eyes to choose a husband,
And by your many talents you should please me;
I know I 'm in the wrong, but I can't help it;
And reasoning can only make me see
I ought to blame myself for being so blind.

TRISSOTIN

Your hand, which I 'm allowed to claim, will bring me
Your heart too, though that heart is now Clitandre's;
I'm bold to think a thousand sweet attentions
May help me find a way to win your love.

HENRIETTE

No, no, my heart can't leave its first attachment,
And can't be moved by your polite attentions.
I may speak frankly to you on this point,
For my avowal need in no wise wound you.
This flame of love, that burns within the heart,
Is not enkindled, as you know, by merit;
Caprice may light it; when our fancy's pleased,
We' re often at a loss to say just why.
If, sir, we loved by choice and wise selection,
You would possess my heart and my affection.
But love is guided otherwise, you know.
Leave me, I beg you, to my native blindness,
And do not seek to profit by constraint
That 's put upon me, sir, in your behalf.
A man of honour will not choose to be
In aught beholden to our parent's power;

It will revolt him to make sacrifice
Of her he loves, and win her heart by force.
Then do not urge my mother to insist
Upon the utmost rigour of her rights.
Take back your love, and offer to another
The homage of a heart so dear as yours.

TRISSOTIN

Ah! can this heart by any means obey you?
Lay on it laws that can be followed, madam.
How shall it cease to love you, pray, unless
You cease to be so lovely, and to spread
Before its eyes the heavenly attractions . . . ?

HENRIETTE

Eh! sir, enough of fustian. For you have
So many Phyllises and Amaranths
And Irises, whom in your verse you paint
So charming, and for whom you swear such ardours . . .

TRISSOTIN

It is my mind that speaks, and not my heart.
With them I am in love as poet only,
The while I love sweet Henriette in earnest.

HENRIETTE

Oh! mercy on us, sir . . .

TRISSOTIN

If that offends you
I shall not soon give over such offending.
This passion, hidden from you hitherto,
Hath vowed you service of eternal date.
And though your beauty frown on my endeavour,

I cannot now refuse a mother's sanction
That promises to crown so dear a passion;
And if I but attain the happiness
Of winning you, it little matters how.

HENRIETTE

But don't you know that there is serious danger
In using force to win a woman's heart;
That it is none too safe—I speak quite plainly—
To wed a woman in her own despite;
And that she may be moved to such resentment
As any husband has good cause to fear?

TRISSOTIN

I find in this no fear to trouble me;
The Wise Man is prepared for any fortune.
He 's cured by reason of all vulgar weakness,
And lifted far above such petty matters;
So he feels not the slightest perturbation
At anything which he cannot control.

HENRIETTE

In truth, sir, I am charmed with you. I never
Had thought philosophy so fine a thing,
Or known that it was capable of teaching
To bear such accidents without a twinge.
Such strength of character, unique in you,
Deserves some special field for its display;
'T is worthy of a mate who constantly
Will take delight in giving it full scope;
And since, in truth, I dare not think myself
Quite fit to show it forth in all its lustre,
I 'll leave that task for someone else to do,
While I forswear the joy of marrying you.

TRISSOTIN, *going off*

We soon shall see the end of this affair;
The notary 's been sent for, and is here.

SCENE II

CHRYSALE, CLITANDRE, HENRIETTE, MARTINE

CHRYSALE

Ah! daughter, I am very glad to find you;
Now, come and do your duty, and submit
Your inclinations to your father's pleasure.
I 'll teach your mother what is what, I will;
To show her my defiance, and to spite her,
Here is Martine, whom I have reinstated.

HENRIETTE

These are most noble resolutions, father.
Take care your humour does not change; be firm,
Insist on your own way; don't let your kindness
Seduce you; don't relax your will; take care
That mother does n't get the better of you.

CHRYSALE

What! Do you take me for a simpleton?

HENRIETTE

Heaven forbid!

CHRYSALE

Am I an idiot, pray?

HENRIETTE

I don't say that.

CHRYSALE

Am I incapable
Of being firm like any man of sense?

HENRIETTE

No, father.

CHRYSALE

Have I, at my time of life,
Too little wit and spirit to be master
In my own house?

HENRIETTE

Oh, no!

CHRYSALE

Am I so weak
My wife can tie me to her apron-string?

HENRIETTE

Of course not, father.

CHRYSALE

Lack-a-day! How now!
You are a saucebox to talk so to me!

HENRIETTE

If I offended you, I did n't mean to.

CHRYSALE

Here in this house, my will shall be the law.

HENRIETTE

Yes, father, surely.

CHRYSALE

No one here but me
Has any right to rule.

HENRIETTE

Exactly so.

CHRYSALE

'T is my place to be master of the household.

HENRIETTE

That 's true.

CHRYSALE

'T is I must give my child in marriage.

HENRIETTE

Yes, yes!

CHRYSALE

Heaven gives me full control of you.

HENRIETTE

Does anyone deny it?

CHRYSALE

I will show you
That in your choice of husband, 't is your father,
And not your mother, that you must obey.

HENRIETTE

Ah! father, 't is my dearest wish to do so;
Make me obey you; that is all I ask.

CHRYSALE

And if my wife should dare resist my will . . .

CLITANDRE

She 's coming, and the notary is with her.

CHRYSALE

Stand by me, all of you.

MARTINE

Trust me, indeed!
I 'll back you up, sir, if there 's any need.

SCENE III

PHILAMINTE, BELISE, ARMANDE, TRISSOTIN, A NOTARY, CHRYSALE, CLITANDRE, HENRIETTE, MARTINE

PHILAMINTE, *to the notary*

Could you not modify your savage style
And draw us up a contract in fine language?

THE NOTARY

Our style is excellent; I 'd be a blockhead,
Madam, to change a single word therein.

BELISE

What barbarism, in the heart of France!
At least, sir, do, for learning's sake, instead
Of crowns and francs, express in mines and talents
The dowry, and the date in ides and kalends.

THE NOTARY

What! Madam, if I granted your request,
I should be hooted at by all my colleagues.

PHILAMINTE

'T is useless to attack such barbarism.
Sit down, sir, at this table here, and write.

(*Seeing Martine*)

Ah! ah! that jade dares show herself again?
Why have you brought her back, sir, to my house?

CHRYSALE

I 'll tell you presently, when there 's more time.
We have another matter first to settle.

THE NOTARY

Now for the contract. Where 's the future bride?

PHILAMINTE

The one I 'm marrying is the younger.

THE NOTARY

Good.

CHRYSALE, *pointing to Henriette*

Yes, that one, sir; her name is Henriette.

THE NOTARY

Right. And the bridegroom?

PHILAMINTE, *pointing to Trissotin*

Here 's the man I 've chosen.

CHRYSALE, *pointing to Clitandre*

And here 's the man that I, myself, in person,
Say she shall marry.

THE NOTARY

What! Two husbands? That 's
More than enough, according to our customs.

PHILAMINTE, *to the notary*

Why hesitate? Write down, write down, I say,
This Trissotin to be my son-in-law.

CHRYSALE

Write down, write down, sir, this Clitandre, I say,
To be my son-in-law.

THE NOTARY

First, be agreed,
Consult together, settle on the bridegroom.

PHILAMINTE

Abide, abide, sir, by the choice I 've made.

CHRYSALE

Perform, perform, sir, what I have resolved on.

THE NOTARY

First tell me which one's orders I shall follow.

PHILAMINTE, *to Chrysale*

How now, sir? Do you dare dispute my will?

CHRYSALE

I can't endure to have my daughter sought
Just for the wealth that 's in my family.

PHILAMINTE

In faith, a lot he thinks about your wealth!
A proper care, indeed, for such a sage!

CHRYSALE

In short, I choose Clitandre shall marry her.

PHILAMINTE, *pointing to Trissotin*

And I have chosen him to be her husband.
My choice shall stand. That 's settled.

CHRYSALE

Hoity-toity!
You carry things high-handedly, indeed!

MARTINE

'Taint for the wife, says I, to rule the shop;
The man had always ought to be on top.

CHRYSALE

Well said.

MARTINE

Though I 'm discharged, as sure as day,
The hen sha' n't crow before the cock, I say.

CHRYSALE

That 's sure.

MARTINE

A man is mocked with jeering speeches
If in his house the woman wears the breeches.

CHRYSALE

Just so.

MARTINE

If I 'd a husband, I can tell you,
I 'd want him to be master of the house ;
I 'd hate him, if he let himself he henpecked ;
And if I contradicted him, an' talked
Too high and mighty, he 'd be right enough
To take my tone down with a good sound cuff.

CHRYSALE

That 's talking sense.

MARTINE

And master 's in the right
To want to give his girl a proper husband.

CHRYSALE

Yes.

MARTINE

And why not Clitandre? He 's young and handsome.

Why choose a pedant fool, that 's always prating?
She wants a husband, not a pedagogue;
And since she needs no Greek, nor Latin either,
She don't need Mister Trissotin, sure, neither.

CHRYSALE

Hear, hear, hear!

PHILAMINTE

We must let her have her say.

MARTINE

Pedants are good for nothing but to preach
Behind a desk. I 've said a thousand times,
I 'd never take no scollard for my husband.
Wit 's not the thing you need about a house,
And books don't jibe with marriage, that I warrant;
I 'll have a husband, if I ever get one,
Who 'll be a Doctor only for his wife,
Who 'll want no other book to read but me,
And won't—by madam's leave—know A from B.

PHILAMINTE, *to Chrysale*

Well, has she done? And have I long enough
Heard out your fit interpreter, in silence?

CHRYSALE

She speaks the truth.

PHILAMINTE

Now then, to make an end
Of this dispute, my will must he fulfilled.
(*Pointing to Trissotin*)
This man and Henriette shall be united
At once. I 've said it, and I 'll have it so.

Don't answer me. If you have given Clitandre
Your word, then offer him her elder sister.

CHRYSALE

Why, that 's a way to come to some agreement.
(*To Henriette and Clitandre*)
See now; will you accept this compromise?

HENRIETTE

Oh! father!

CLITANDRE, *to Chrysale*

Oh! sir!

BELISE

One might make him offers
Much more acceptable. But we are founding
A love as pure as is the morning star;
Therein the thinking substance is accepted,
But substance with extent of space is banished.

SCENE IV

ARISTE, CHRYSALE, PHILAMINTE, BELISE, HENRIETTE, ARMANDE, TRISSOTIN, THE NOTARY, CLITANDRE, MARTINE

ARISTE

It grieves me to disturb these joyous rites
With painful tidings such as I must bear.
These letters both bring news that makes me feel
Deep sympathy for you in your distress:
(*To Philaminte*)
One is for you, from your attorney, madam;
(*To Chrysale*)
The other, yours, from Lyons.

PHILAMINTE

What misfortune
Deserving of our notice, can they tell us?

ARISTE

This letter tells of one, and you may read it.

PHILAMINTE

"Madam, I have desired your brother to deliver you this letter, which will inform you of what I dared not come and tell you myself. Through your great neglect of your affairs, I received no notice from the clerk of your judge of first instance, and you have irrevocably lost your suit, which you should have won."

CHRYSALE, *to Philaminte*

Your suit is lost!

PHILAMINTE, *to Chrysale*

You 're very much perturbed!
My heart 's in no wise shaken by this blow.
Pray, do show less vulgarity of soul,
And brave, as I do, all the shafts of fortune.

"Your want of care has cost you forty thousand crowns; for that is the sum which, in addition to the costs, the decree of the court has condemned you to pay."

Condemned! Ah! what a shocking word! 't is fit
Only for criminals.

ARISTE

Indeed, 't is wrong;
You 've every reason to complain of that.
He should have said, of course, that you 're entreated

By sentence of the court, at your convenience,
To pay the forty thousand crowns, and costs.

PHILAMINTE

What says the other?

CHRYSALE, *reading*

> "Sir, my friendship for your brother prompts me to take an interest in all that concerns you. I know that your entire property is in charge of Argante and Damon, and I must inform you that they have both failed, the same day."

O heavens! Lose all my property at once!

PHILAMINTE, *to Chrysale*

Ah! what a shameful outburst! Fie! 'T is nothing;
The Wise Man never feels reverse of fortune;
For though he loses all, he has himself.
Be not concerned; let 's finish our affair.
(*Pointing to Trissotin*)
His fortune will suffice for him and us.

TRISSOTIN

No, madam, do not urge the matter further.
I find that all are set against this marriage;
I would not force myself on anyone.

PHILAMINTE

This thought comes to you somewhat suddenly,
And follows closely, sir, on our misfortune.

TRISSOTIN

I tire at last of such prolonged resistance,
And rather will renounce the whole affair;
I want no heart that yields not of itself.

PHILAMINTE

I see, sir, and not greatly to your honour,
The truth of what till now I would not credit.

TRISSOTIN

See what you please; I care not how you take it.
I 'm not a man to bear the infamy
Of such rebuffs as I must suffer here.
I 'm worthy more esteem, as you should know;
You want me not? I make my bow, and go.

SCENE V

ARISTE, CHRYSALE, PHILAMINTE, BELISE, ARMANDE, HENRIETTE, CLITANDRE, THE NOTARY, MARTINE

PHILAMINTE

What plain display of mercenary motives!
And what unphilosophical behaviour!

CLITANDRE

I 'm no philosopher; but none the less
I 'm bound to you, in good or evil fortune,
And dare to offer, madam, with myself,
Whatever worldly goods I stand possessed of.

PHILAMINTE

You charm me, sir, by such a generous action;
I 'm glad to crown your love, and grant your suit;
Your true affection wins you Henriette . . .

HENRIETTE

No, mother; I have changed my mind. Allow me
Still to resist your will.

CLITANDRE

What! you oppose
My happiness? when all the rest surrender . . .

HENRIETTE

I know how small your fortune is, Clitandre,
And always wished to marry you, because
I thought this match would crown my dearest hopes
And help to set your fortunes right, as well.
But now that fate has proved unkind to us,
I love you far too much, in evil fortune,
To load you down with our adversities.

CLITANDRE

But with you, any fate would make me happy;
Without you, none would be endurable.

HENRIETTE

Love, in its ardour, always speaks like this;
But later, come regrets; let us avoid them.
Nothing so quickly frays the marriage-tie
As grievous lack of simple things we need;
And in the end, the everyday vexations
Often lead up to harsh recriminations.

ARISTE, *to Henriette*

Is what you 've said just now the only reason
Why you refuse a marriage with Clitandre?

HENRIETTE

Yes, but for that my heart would run to meet it;
If now I turn away, it is for love's sake.

ARISTE

Then yield to this fond union; for I brought you
False news. It was a trick, to serve your love,

To undeceive my sister, and to show her
What her philosopher would prove, when tested.

CHRYSALE

Now Heaven be praised for this!

PHILAMINTE

I 'm overjoyed
To think how grieved will be that base deserter.
For punishment, his sordid avarice
Shall see this match superbly celebrated.

CHRYSALE, *to Clitandre*

I told you, did n't I, that you should have her?

ARMANDE, *to Philaminte*

And will you sacrifice me to them so?

PHILAMINTE

It is not sacrificing you at all.
You have philosophy to help you see
Their passion crowned, with equanimity.

BELISE

Let him look to it, I am in his heart.
He who, despairing, hastes to take a wife,
May oft repent, at leisure, all his life.

CHRYSALE, *to the notary*

Come, come, sir, you can see that I uphold you;
Now draw the bond exactly as I told you.

THE END

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